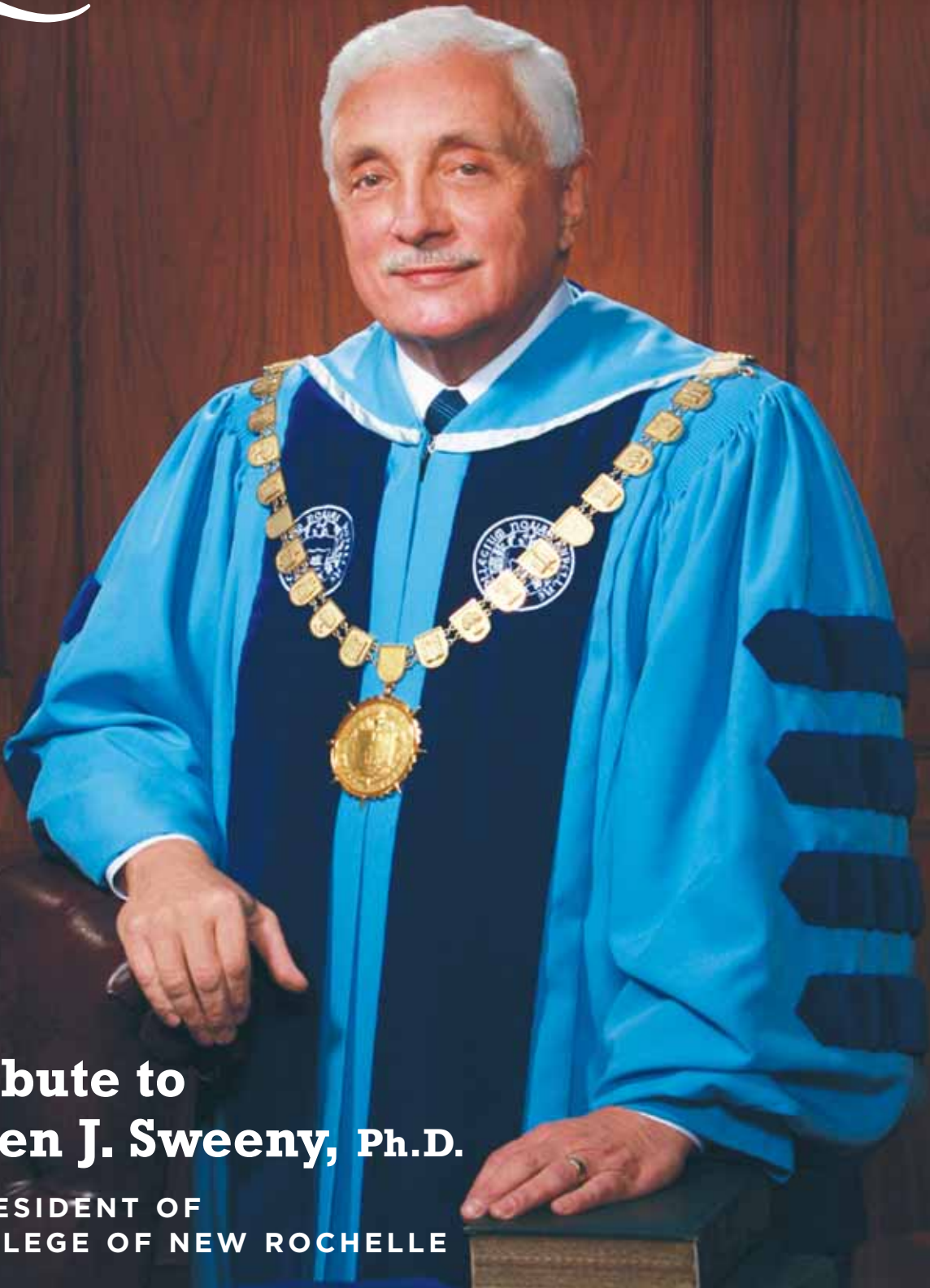


QUARTERLY

The College of New Rochelle Alumnae/i Magazine

Spring 2011 | Volume 81 | No. 4

A portrait of Stephen J. Sweeny, Ph.D., the 12th President of The College of New Rochelle. He is an older man with white hair and a mustache, wearing a blue academic robe with gold stoles and a large gold medallion. He is seated in a dark leather chair, with his right hand resting on a stack of books and his left hand on his lap. A blue graduation cap with a gold tassel is visible in the foreground.

In Tribute to Stephen J. Sweeny, Ph.D.

12TH PRESIDENT OF
THE COLLEGE OF NEW ROCHELLE

QUARTERLY

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EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor

Lenore Boytim Carpinelli SAS'89

Assistant Editor

Andrea Hindmarsh Fagon SAS'00, GS'09

Class Notes Editor

Lisa Skelton

Quarterly Design

Kim Barron

New Leaf Graphic Design

Writers

Joan Bailey

Elizabeth Sweeny Block

Michael Galligan-Stierle

Ann Peterson, OSU

Gary Rockfield

Mauro C. Romita

Photographs

Bachrach Studios

College Archives

Johnna Paladino Roca

John Vecchiolla

Joe Vericker

Letters to the Editor and editorial correspondence should be directed to:

Lenore Boytim Carpinelli SAS'89

(914) 654-5272

E-mail: lcarpinelli@cnr.edu

Class Notes columns and correspondence should be directed to:

Andrea Hindmarsh Fagon SAS'00, GS'09

(914) 654-5285

E-mail: afagon@cnr.edu

Address updates should be directed to:

Ann Summo

(914) 654-5295

E-mail: asummo@cnr.edu

To contact the Office of Alumnae/i Relations, please call:

1-800-850-1904

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QUARTERLY (ISSN 1550-8153) Volume 81, No. 4
Spring 2011 is published quarterly by the Office of College Relations, The College of New Rochelle, 29 Castle Place, New Rochelle, NY 10805-2339. Periodicals postage at New Rochelle, NY, mailing office. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *QUARTERLY*, The College of New Rochelle, 29 Castle Place, New Rochelle, NY 10805-2339.

Cover Photo: Stephen J. Sweeny,
12th President of The College of New Rochelle.
Photo by Bachrach Studios.



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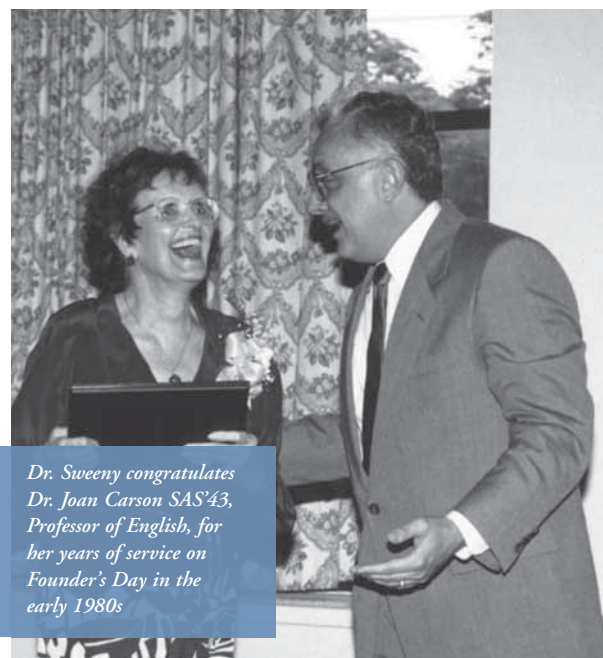
36 BY MAURO C. ROMITA



During his presidency, Dr. Sweeny met thousands of graduates on Maura Lawn and more recently on the stage at Radio City Music Hall to congratulate them on their degrees.



Greeting those gathered for the blessing of the newly renovated Mother Irene Gill Library with Edward Cardinal Egan in 2001



Dr. Sweeny congratulates Dr. Joan Carson SAS'43, Professor of English, for her years of service on Founder's Day in the early 1980s

In Tribute to Stephen J. Sweeny, Ph.D.

12TH PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE OF NEW ROCHELLE





Dr. Stephen J. Sweeny was inaugurated as the 12th President of The College of New Rochelle in 1997. His years as President have capped an association with the College that began 35 years ago. Throughout that time, he has demonstrated the strength of his commitment to the College's Ursuline heritage and to its mission and identity as a Catholic, women's, liberal arts institution with undergraduate and graduate programs of excellence offered in a community drawn from diversity.

For more than three decades, particularly in his roles as Chief Academic Officer for 18 years and President for 14 years, Dr. Sweeny has had a significant influence on the strategic direction of the College, which is comprised of the School of Arts & Sciences (for women), the School of New Resources (for adult learners), the School of Nursing, and the Graduate School. Dedicated to the education of women and men in the liberal arts and professional studies, the College is recognized for its commitment to diversity with more than 5,000 students enrolled at its six campuses in Westchester, Brooklyn, Co-op City, the South Bronx, Harlem, and at DC-37 Union headquarters in lower Manhattan.

Under Dr. Sweeny's direction, the College completed its most successful campaign in the College's history, raising more than \$78 million for special projects, including the construction of a new Wellness Center, the renovation of Gill Library and Holy Family Chapel, an updated Learning Center for Nursing, and millions of dollars for direct assistance to students in the form of scholarships and financial aid. He also oversaw the completion of the renovation of the John Cardinal O'Connor Campus in the South Bronx.

Dr. Sweeny currently serves on numerous boards, including The Association for Catholic Colleges and Universities and the International Federation of Catholic Universities, and is a member of the Middle States' Commission on Higher Education. He received a Ph.D. in higher education, an M.A. in theology, an M.A. in counseling psychology, and a B.A. in Spanish. Dr. Sweeny is a Knight of the Order of Malta and a Knight Grand Cross in the order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre.



Top Left: Dr. Sweeny is inaugurated as President in October 1997.

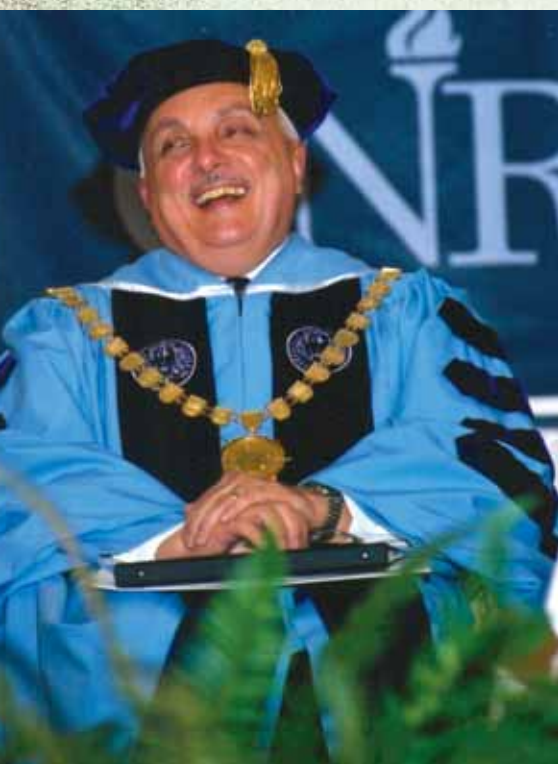
Top Right: With longtime co-chairs of the College's Golf & Tennis Outing (from left) Dolores Castellano King SAS'61, Camille Romita SNR'77, GS'88, & Beau Lang Erbe SAS'57

Bottom Right: Dr. Sweeny, then Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, with his predecessor Sr. Dorothy Ann Kelly and Joan Bristol, who was then Vice President for Student Services

Telling the Story of the “Privilege of a Lifetime”

A CONVERSATION WITH DR. STEPHEN J. SWEENY

As he entered the final months of his presidency, *Quarterly* editor Lenore Boytim Carpinelli SAS’89 and staff writer John Coyne sat down with President Sweeny to reflect back on the role he describes as the “privilege of a lifetime.”



At the convocation which marked the opening of the Centennial celebration in September 2003

What do you feel has been your single greatest achievement at the College?

It’s not the easiest question I’ve ever faced. And it is not an easy question to answer. I think my greatest achievement has been as leader of the community, which has been a wonderful privilege, and to keep reminding people of the centrality of our mission.

My time at CNR has been 35 years. I was privileged to be president for 14 of those years. In both time-frames, and in all the jobs that I’ve had, who we are and what we achieve by virtue of that mission has been the most important part of my life at The College of New Rochelle.

History will say what this time-frame has meant for the College, but for me, I’m most satisfied with the fact that I have reminded all who have joined me in this journey to give primacy to our mission. It is what gives unity to the College Community. The great diversity we have as a community is not an obstacle, it is our strength. And in this wonderful diversity, we are held together by our mission.

Can you try to recall some of the most satisfying moments you’ve had in your many roles as a college administrator here at CNR?

That’s easy. Commencements. Every graduation season has been a central event. I love meeting the students at this campus, at all of the campuses, as they get ready for graduation with their hoodings, the end of their college

careers. It is a wonderful, though brief, moment for me to exchange greetings with them all as they cross the stage at Radio City. It is a high point for all the graduates. And it is also a high point for me personally.

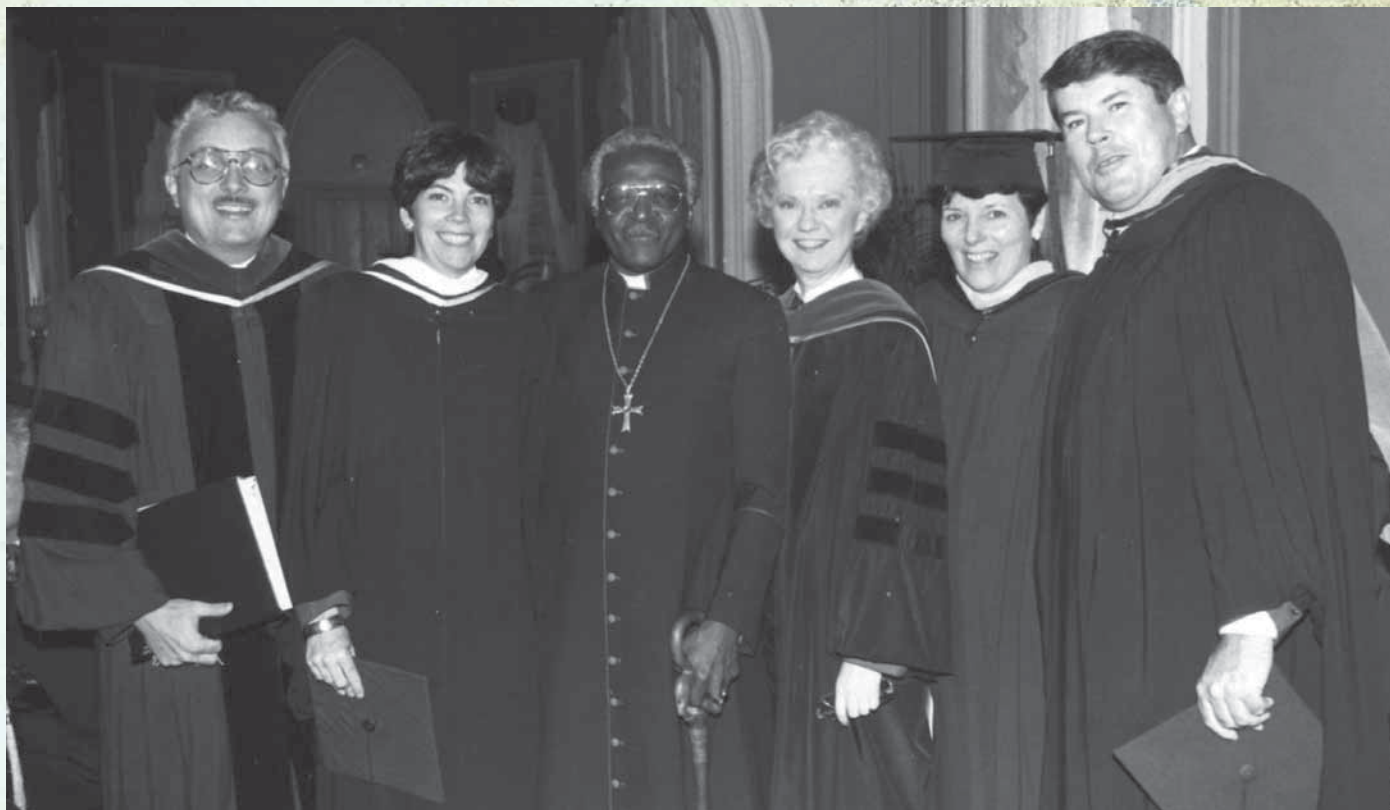
Some people know that I take great pride in signing by hand each diploma, and those statisticians among us tell me that already I’ve signed more than 20,000 diplomas.

Each of those moments has been very special. I never sign a diploma in a blur. I stop and think of each student, each graduate, as I sign the diploma. I say a prayer for each one of those graduates. So, without a doubt, those moments are high points for me in my presidency.

Dinners with students are also high points, attending student functions, curricular and co-curricular events as well, whether it is the Honors presentations, or the presentation in INS (the freshman seminar), or a game at The Wellness Center, dinners with student leaders, or just roaming around the city campuses. Being with students, those are the high points for me and nothing else comes quite close.

Looking back at your years in higher education, what are some of the changes you’ve experienced here at CNR, and in higher education in general?

It’s probably best to start with an answer about higher education. On the national societal level, sadly, I think, we’ve seen a change of attitudes about



higher education that is disappointing. Today, too often, education is seen as a business, a business greedy for public support. The value of a higher education, by and large, has declined.

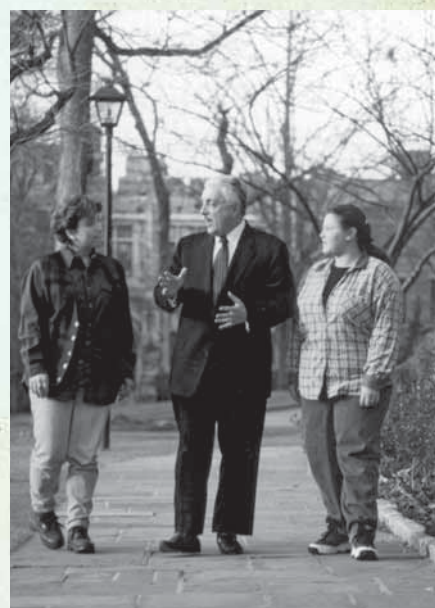
Now, in truth, and in some corners, surveys are done and people will tell you that a college degree is more valuable now than ever. What I'm talking about is society's response, government's response. Higher education is being lumped in with other businesses, forgetting that higher education is the tool that will be responsible for the quality of life in this country. It is vastly different from other businesses. That's a sadness for me, to see that change in the attitude toward higher education.

When America came out of World War II, the country put together the best public policy piece of legislation any of us saw in our lifetimes, that is, the GI Bill of Rights. We were saying as a nation that all citizens deserved full access to American higher education. That sentiment has eroded in the United States and I deeply regret it.

There are some serious changes in delivery of education, and with those

changes, we have seen the roles of people connected with higher education changing. For instance, technology and other advances have changed the role of faculty members. This isn't a bad thing. It is probably a good thing. We've made education much more interactive. The faculty member is not simply the person standing at the front of a group as the recognized authority providing the group with wisdom. The faculty member is an expert, of course, but an expert who is a facilitator of the gaining of knowledge from a variety of sources. Students today have access to information from a variety of places. And this changing role of the faculty member is an important change in American higher education.

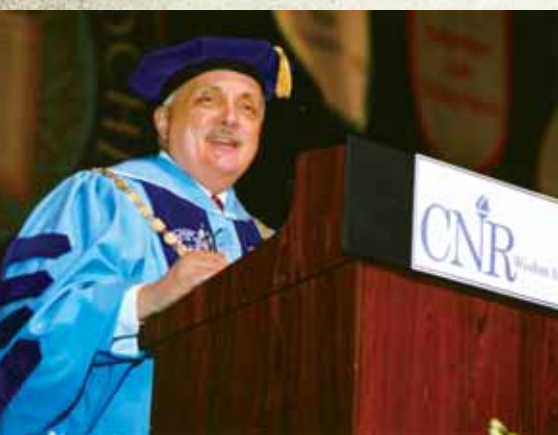
I regret, too—and I don't mean to sound as if I want to return to the 'good old days'—but I think that the value of the liberal arts as central to American higher education has eroded. Higher education is now oriented to careers. Too often, the broad, rich background of a liberal arts and sciences education has been downplayed



Top: Prior to the convocation honoring Archbishop Desmond Tutu in 1990 with Brenna Mayer, Vice President for College Advancement, Archbishop Tutu, Sr. Dorothy Ann Kelly, Joan Bristol, Vice President for Student Services, & Walter McCarthy, Vice President for Financial Affairs

Bottom: Walking on campus with students Lisa Dziegielewski SAS'98 and Jaclyn Ortega SAS'99

The truth is, when I, in my moments of quiet, weigh the quality of the changes over these 35 years, pros and cons, I believe we're stronger than ever. I believe we're more vibrant, and vital, and relevant—more necessary in the world as a liberal arts, Catholic college for women.



Dr. Sweeney speaks to the graduating Class of 2004 at Commencement.

in favor of getting the graduate a quick job. Education is being seen only for the purpose of finding employment.

So, those are the changes I see in higher education in America. One, changes coming to us by technology, which have changed the roles of everybody connected with higher education; two, changes in the valuing of what the content of higher education has been, which is the concept of broad-based liberal arts and sciences education, in favor of narrow professionalism with much more focused majors and concentrations to make a ready transition to business, and that's had an impact on The College of New Rochelle.

Now what are the changes that I have seen at The College of New Rochelle?

Happily, we have seen the question of broad access promoted here at the College more than ever. The question of the primacy of liberal arts has emerged stronger than ever. We have seen a change in the role of faculty. When you ask our students what's the greatest strength of the College, they will tell you it's the faculty. Their access to faculty, their satisfactory relationships with faculty, I think, is part of the change. Students see our faculty as facilitators, faculty as mentors, faculty as guides through the maze of all kinds of sources of information for students.

We have a nice combination of the sense of the liberal arts and sciences as the foundation of meaningful adult life. Building on that, we have majors, and concentrations, and areas of interest that lead to successful careers, effective citizenship in the world.

We have done a great job of balancing those changes that have taken place in the United States, devaluing

the liberal arts, emphasizing vocationalism. We have been able to happily resist that current.

So, there have been a lot of changes at The College of New Rochelle. In my 35 years, I have appreciated more and more the place of the Ursulines as the founders, those who gave the gift of The College of New Rochelle. Clearly, one significant change has been the loss of the Ursuline presence on campus. However, I have watched us develop a greater consciousness of the Ursuline charism, of the Ursuline spirit which guides us, and which is possessed now by more and more members of the College Community as we see the demographics of the Ursulines themselves change.

It was possible 35 years ago when I arrived at CNR to look around the campus and constantly encounter Ursulines themselves. Today, only a handful are actively connected in the life of the College, but we are more and more conscious of the need to be the new Ursulines, if you will, the new expression of the Ursuline spirit—the commitment to the values espoused by St. Angela and her followers.

The truth is, when I, in my moments of quiet, weigh the quality of the changes over these 35 years, pros and cons, I believe we're stronger than ever. I believe we're more vibrant, and vital, and relevant—more necessary in the world as a liberal arts, Catholic college for women. Change is simply the price of doing business as human beings. I think this College in particular has been very good at accommodating change. We are innovative. We are creative. We are ahead of the curve on some major

FACING PAGE: Photo A: Posing with Board Chair Michael Ambler (left) and the College's honorary degree recipients in 2008 (from left) Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga, SDB, Sr. Antona Ebo, FSM, & Emily Rafferty • Photo B: Dr. Sweeney hugs a student at the Co-op City Campus in 2006 • Photo C: In the Castle Parlors • Photo D: With Sr. Dorothy Ann Kelly at an event honoring Mother Irene Gill hosted by the Westchester County Office for Women • Photo E: Dr. Sweeney cuts the ribbon at The Wellness Center in 2008 • Photo F: Dr. Sweeney & Anne Sweeney SAS'79, Co-Chair of Disney Media Networks and President of Disney/ABC Television Group • Photo G: With Mimi Deliee Hecht SAS'30 as she celebrates her 70th reunion at Alumnae College in 2000 • Photo H: Ready to climb aboard World Yacht Cruises for a School of New Resources cruise around Manhattan • Photo I: Dr. Sweeney with the 2010 Serviam award winners (from left) Tanysha Farley, School of New Resources, Zena Jamal, School of Nursing, Kristen Diaz, School of Arts & Sciences, & Jane Fitzpatrick, Graduate School • Photo J: Congratulating a student at the DC-37 Campus Hooding in 2005.





Dr. Sweeny leaves the stage following The Wellness Center dedication with Board Chair Michael Ambler in 2008.

changes that now are being espoused by colleges and universities across the country.

We weren't afraid to take the gift of the liberal arts education, which we were good at, and offer it to people where they live and work; to offer it in settings that were more congenial than simply in this corner of Westchester. We are good at change in terms of welcoming new fields of study that are connected with our pronounced sense of mission.

I believe we are stronger than ever. Do we have challenges? Yes, of course. But we are better placed than most institutions to navigate those new challenges.

Going back to the changes in higher education. What do you think can be done to protect colleges and universities?

There's an attempt in too many quarters to try to solve societal ills and societal failings by tampering with education in general. We have had—and everybody knows the jargon—"No Child Left Behind" or "The Race to the Top" as major agenda items in the way education has been dealt with by the federal government.

Unfortunately, it's an approach that sees education narrowly. It sees education as only successfully measured by someone's idea of what the right tests are. So success is seen as being short-term and measured by a number of tests. To me that is only a small piece of the value and the complexity of education. It doesn't take into account the long run and the deep values of education to one's life. It is an oversimplification of what goes on in education, and I believe it is a distortion.

It comes out of a need to find fault. That was not the sense of the country when we were welcoming back the troops from World War II. In those years there was an expansiveness. "Welcome. Everybody. Enjoy the fruits of American higher education because that will open up the future for all of us. It will give all of us a better future." Now there is a narrowing of

an understanding of higher education, a narrowing of the sense of access to higher education in order to be able to demonstrate more and more the so-called effectiveness of it through testing and simple measurement.

During all the years at CNR, are there any personalities that particularly stand out in your mind?

The great gift of the 35 years has been the people. I see this huge kaleidoscope of faces and names go by. I'm lucky enough to have had the opportunity to know personally each of the Ursuline presidents of the College. I came in 1976 and all of my predecessors who were Ursulines—and the one layperson—were still alive, so I got the chance to know each of them.

Mother Dorothea, the first Ursuline president, was a very accomplished woman and maintained an interest in the life of the College deep into her advanced years. The same could be said for each of the presidents.

My predecessors have been outstanding, needless to say. We could spend the whole interview talking about Sr. Dorothy Ann Kelly. People know I have called Sr. Dorothy Ann the second foundress of the College. She took us into the modern age with a gracefulness and a self-confidence that was very reassuring to us all.

So, the Ursulines, my predecessors, they were outstanding, and they come readily to mind. I've worked with chairs of boards and board members who have been extraordinary. They believed in us and only one in my lifetime was a graduate of CNR, Sr. Jean Baptiste Nicholson.

Other chairs that I've known had great admiration for the College without having their own direct connection as students. They knew students or were married to students, or were just witness to the work of the College and loved the mission. So, those people stand out in my mind.

The Ursulines were smart enough to gather around them wonderful laypeople who were collaborators in



Top: At the Brooklyn Campus Hooding in 2007

Middle: With Toni Parks, daughter of Gordon Parks, at the opening of an exhibit she curated of her father's work at the Gordon Parks Gallery at the College's John Cardinal O'Connor Campus in the South Bronx in 2006

Bottom: Dr. Sweeny, who was principal of The Incarnation School in New York City when he was just 25, was honored by The Incarnation School with the Monsignor Edward J. Waterson Award in 2000.



Top: Dr. Sweeney cuts the ribbon at the College's Rosa Parks Campus in Harlem in 1989 with Dr. Bessie Blake, Dean of the School of New Resources, Rosa Parks, Sr. Dorothy Ann Kelly, Carolyn Tonge, Campus Director, & Jim Nicholson, Chair, Board of Trustees.

Bottom: Walking with Cornel West, who spoke and received an honorary degree from the College during the Centennial celebration in 2004

the life of the College. And I had the opportunity to meet many of the early stars. It was my pleasure to spend time with the famous Thompsons, Ernest and Florence. They were the founders of the Art Department. We were wise enough, while they were still able to travel, to honor them—and honor ourselves—with honorary degrees. They represented what was always best in the faculty. I never met her—she had died in 1960—but Mary Dora Rogick, our very famous scientist, was another star of CNR.

We have always had an extraordinarily loyal workforce in the physical plant, in security, in all the departments of the College. They saw this College as their home. I have had many great friendships with them.

When I became president 14 years ago, one of the members of the house-keeping/maintenance staff said to me, “Steve, what do we call you now?” And I said, “What *do* you call me?” And he said, “Well, we call you Steve. Guess we’ve got to stop that.” And I said, “Well, then if you stop that, I won’t be able to call you by your first name. So why don’t we just say, nothing has changed when I become president.” And it never did in what mattered most, our relationship.

And all of them contributed a great deal to the College?

Yes they did. Here’s just one example, Joe Carlo.

Joe Carlo’s story is typical of the kind of devotion we have from everyone to this College. When I was still Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, I was here one day (and I believe Sr. Dorothy Ann was in Rome for a meeting) and a call came through from Joe Carlo, who had been, basically, the physical plant person in what was then the sports building for 30, 35, 40 years—and had retired. He called saying, “I have some pieces of furniture for you.”

Through the years it was his interest to collect and repair furniture, thinking that the pieces might be useful in the Castle. He asked, “Would you send a truck to pick them up?”

He was living in retirement in Maine. A few years before he died, Joe had lost his wife and the Ursulines in particular were wonderful to Joe as his wife was so ill. They were wonderful to both of them, and then were solicitous of him as he began his new life without her.

So, we sent a truck. The truck was a little panel one, as I recall. I figured Joe had four, five, or six pieces of furniture that he found at an antique

show. It was what he had told us. Well, they called me as soon as they got there and said, “Send a bigger truck!” They needed a huge truck. A truck that could take all of the pieces of furniture that Joe had collected and repaired and would fill the Castle.

Over the years, Joe had collected and restored wonderful pieces of furniture and what we have in the Castle today, to a large extent, are the pieces he gave the College. It is Joe Carlo’s gift. And the furniture ranges from a foot-pump organ with beautiful woodwork, which still works, to mirrors, and chairs, and loveseats, and all of them period pieces.

Joe Carlo didn’t make a big fuss about his wonderful gift. He simply said, “I saw this furniture as I went along in life and I thought it would be good, and I kept it all for you. The nuns were always good to me and I wanted to do this for the College.”

Kathy LeVache is another great story of this College. She taught every single student for 46 years at The College of New Rochelle. She is a person of incredible integrity, with a spectacular easy-to-deal-with personality, and with the best interest of every student at heart. She spent many hours with individual students, counseling and mentoring them. And she continues to come to sports events now, many years later.

Those are the kinds of people we’ve always been able to attract to CNR. So, when you ask me to remember names and personalities—there are a lot of them.

So, the hard part for me in leaving is not leaving the presidency. I love this job. And it has been an honor to lead the institution and to lead the community. The hard part, really, will be to leave this community, my supportive community for 35 years. The hard part then will be to adjust to not having this community around me every day.

Somebody was visiting the other day who had been here for many years, and then been away for ten. Walking

through the living room of the Castle he got all teary and said, “It all comes back. Every day was so wonderful walking through this place. And when I come back, I’m reminded of it.”

Well, that’s what separates us from a lot of places. It’s the quality of the relationships, the depth of the commitment, the possessing of the sense of mission that holds us together; we take care of each other.

Why do you think there will always be a place for a college like CNR?

Because of the centrality of what we do, the elements of our mission—the primacy of the liberal arts, the commitment to women, the license and the freedom and the gift we have in being Catholic, which allows us to pursue values that are much needed in the world, the notion of the building of community as a great value needed in the world, the connection between our educational programs and the ability to lead in the world—all of those are very current values. I can say without hesitation, there’s more need than ever for what we have here at CNR because these values, unfortunately, aren’t always the values that the world holds as models. So, yes, I think there is without a question a great need for a place like The College of New Rochelle.

When I meet new parents who come here to visit the College with their children, they say to me that we are what they are looking for as a family. They wanted a college for their children which has a set of values. So, is there a future for CNR? Yes, there certainly is.

That brings us to the other side of the question—what’s wrong with education?

Exactly! I believe we emphasize the things that are forgotten in the hassles of public policy, in the hassles of politics, in the hassles of the economics of the world. We are constant in the fundamental values. We’re not constant in how we do it—that would make us a

The hard part, really, will be to leave this community, my supportive community for 35 years. The hard part then will be to adjust to not having this community around me every day.



With Bishop Gerald Walsh, DD, at the dedication of The Wellness Center



Clockwise from top left: With Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa • Dr. Sweeney and John Cardinal O'Connor • Looking on as Edward Cardinal Egan blesses Mother Irene Gill Library • Dr. Sweeney and honorary degree recipients Cicely Tyson, Maureen Orth, & Tim Russert in 2005 • Greeting then New York State Senator Hillary Clinton.

dinosaur, and that's just what we're not.

There have been dramatic changes in this institution from, say—let's use the year 1970. Here we are 40, 41 years later. In 1970 we had about 800 students, all women, undergraduates, 70 percent residents, and a wonderful liberal arts program, no question about it. We began then to see changes around us: the civil rights movement, the women's movement, Vietnam, and the peace movement.

And we were smart enough to say: We can't stay the way we are if we're going to have our values endure. If we're going to be effective in having these values persist into the future, maybe even have a greater influence into the future, we need to change our delivery systems. Not what we do, but the way we do them.

So, today, 40 years later, we have 5,000-plus students, undergraduate, graduate, six campuses, a commitment to women for sure in the whole institution, but particularly still in the School of Arts & Sciences. And we have wonderful new programs, and wonderful

new activities, that honor those fundamental values we started with.

They say that the successful college and university is one that has on the one hand a very solid planning process and works carefully, methodically, and keeps moving forward, but which also has, at the same time, the self-confidence and freedom to react spontaneously to the needs and opportunities as they arise. And I think that's exactly who we are. I've been very pleased to be part of such a college. We have good planning processes in place, but we are not so captive to our processes that we miss opportunities. And that's why we are, 107 years later, still providing the gifts of those fundamental values and not afraid to take advantage of the opportunities the world presents to us.

Can you think of some advice you were given that is, for you, wisdom for life?

I remember this one very well. And it was Sr. Dorothy Ann, my dear friend and mentor, who when I was hired and often as I made a couple of quick

moves to serious administration, said to me, "You know, when all is said and done, it is relationships. We can give you the wherewithal to make good decisions with information. We all have our own gifts. The success, though, comes from the quality of your relationships. And if you falter, and if you stumble, and if you make mistakes, people will be wonderful to you because they know who you are and they have found comfort in relating with you and to you, and you with them." Nothing's clearer than that is truly the case.

I didn't need to have all the answers. That was never my thing. I didn't need to always be right—that was never my thing either. I needed to be surrounded, though, by very talented people, and I always was, and I needed to be part of a community that was a caring environment. And I was always comfortable just reaching out and having people reach out to me.

She, of course, as she was in so many things, was right. The success of leadership comes from the quality of relationships. And she demonstrated that. She was comfortable walking with all categories of people, all walks of life, and she was very much herself. I think that was something I always admired and I have tried to emulate. There's no return in having a variety of personalities or personas. One has to be truly oneself and out of that comes a quality of relationship that is invaluable and is the one ingredient necessary to be successful in leadership. All the rest you can acquire, but you've got to have a passion about good relationships and really mean it. So that was wisdom for life for me.

And I've been very blessed with good mentors and good counsel all around me.

You leave the College in fine shape—positive budget, a growing undergraduate enrollment, five city campuses, a new Wellness Center. What issues and challenges do you think face the new administration?

The College of New Rochelle, of course, has the same challenge that it's had for 107 years and will have into the future. Providing an excellent educational program is not in question. That's what the College does, we're good at it, and we have no doubt that we will continue to do that, and the new administration will raise the bar and do it even better. The challenge has always been for us the balance of making ourselves affordable and accessible while providing that excellent program.

So it's a money issue. There's no doubt about it. Not that we're threatened, our existence is threatened—not at all. It is so, though, that because we're mission driven, we do not charge an exorbitant tuition rate. And we try to keep our tuition as affordable as possible. And what comes with that then is the challenge of very, very tight finances. It's always been this way. The Ursulines saved and scrimped in their own lives in the convent in order to make the life of the College as much a quality life as possible. So, through our whole history this has been the case. It's the case of institutions of our type, which are faith-based, committed to access, and not at all extravagant in whom we are or what we do, but very eager to provide the best quality we can on very conservative finances.

So that's a challenge and every administration goes through that. It's not insurmountable. It's a good one. Day-by-day and year-by-year, we seem to have done very well with that and stayed in the black, of course, as we know, and that's really important. So, that's the given for a mission-driven institution like ourselves with the mission that we have.

What other challenges are there? I think we can't even imagine some of



Top: Dr. Sweeny unveils "CNR: Love One Another" with artist Laura James in the Gill Library Alumnae Room. The painting was commissioned for the Centennial of the College.

Middle: At his first Commencement as President with members of his executive team Dr. Joan Bailey, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, & Dr. Ellen Curry Damato, Executive Vice President (front row); Walter McCarthy, Vice President for Financial Affairs, Joan Bristol, Vice President for Student Services, & Brenna Mayer, Vice President for College Advancement (back row)

Bottom: Dr. Sweeny greets Sr. Fran Lyle, OSU SAS'46 at the Epiphany mass and brunch in 2002.

The College has shaped my whole life. I never would have thought that I would ever spend 35 years doing anything. And be happy at it besides.



Top: Dr. Sweeny, pictured here with Edward Cardinal Egan and Martin Moran, is a Knight Grand Cross in the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre.

Bottom: With Helene Schaeffer, who received her bachelor's degree from CNR at the age of 85 and an honorary doctorate from the College just before her 100th birthday in 2000

the challenges of the next 10 or 15 years because change is happening so rapidly. There's a professor at NYU, who was a very famous professor of communications, who used the face of a clock to demonstrate the increasing speed of change. And he had great definitions for all of this. And most of the change in the world has happened in the last minute on the face of the clock.

Speaking of planning...what do you plan for your next career?

Right now I don't have any great plans. I'm fully engaged in the job of being president of CNR. I'm anxious to do that until July 1. I have not had the chance to really think through what I'll do next. A couple of things emerge though. I'm going to take a couple of months just to catch my breath and do some reading. Obviously, I'm passionate about certain causes and I'm not going to get too far away from them.

My educational background is such that I put time in elementary and junior high school teaching and administration. I've done serious counseling work in psychology. I've taught in higher education. Those things are just natural to me. I always saw myself as a teacher. So, I'll probably look for some outlets with that.

You mean you might go back to teaching?

Maybe, I want to have some connection with education. I serve on a number of nonprofit boards, which I love, and it would be nice to take who we are as the College, and who I am as a person, and continue to share it with others.

One of the other issues involved in my planning for the future is I have no need to be in charge of something. I have been there, and done that, my whole life. I was principal of a very large school when I was 25, and I've always had senior administration positions since then. I think now I'd like to step back. I'm happy to provide counsel and wisdom where it works, where

anybody might think it might be helpful, but I don't need—at this stage in life—to be in charge.

We'll see what happens next. I'm going to talk to a few friends and see if they have any thoughts of where I might be helpful. I'm not rushing into anything.

So I'm going to be president of the College until I leave, and that doesn't give me a lot of time to plan for the future. Then I'm going to give my successor room to continue on her own. That's very important.

I have some interests that I'd like to pursue. I'm an undergraduate Spanish major. I speak Spanish. I love Spanish literature. It was a great passion of mine, and I've never been able to spend a lot of time on it and I would like to do that.

There are some other interesting topics I'd like to pursue. I'd like to catch up with psychology. I'm a little out of date with that reading and research. I think I'd like to learn a little more formal cooking. I enjoy cooking. I'd like to take classes. So those are things that I know, if I get a chance, I'll pursue a little bit.

Do you know where you're going to settle?

Again, we haven't gotten that far. It's hard for me to think that we won't be in New York, Westchester or New York City. Here is where my life has been, here are where my friends are. I'm not about to disrupt all of that. But I do want to give room to President Judy Huntington.

A president is a very public person and after 35 years, after 14 years as president, people stop and kind of single you out. I want to be far enough away that I am not interfering with her new position. And it is good for the College that there is one representative.

I'll carry the title of president emeritus as of July 1. I can't escape that. But I can give her space to be her own president.



Dr. Sweeny signs the highest and final steel beam to be put in place during the construction of The Wellness Center to mark the "topping off" of the building in 2007.

One last question. Is there a question we didn't ask that you'd like to answer?

That's good. No, I think you touched it all. The truth is I have been extraordinarily privileged for 35 years. The College has shaped my whole life. I never would have thought that I would ever spend 35 years doing anything. And be happy at it besides. I have enjoyed coming to work every day, and then to be the president was really extraordinary. So, I think we've touched on all of that, and the great gift for me has been the people, the students especially.

Also, I have had an awful lot of support from some key people—the Ursulines, the trustees, my good relationships with faculty, and staff, and support staff at every level. We could fill volumes with my gratitude to my wife, Barbara, for unreserved support through these 35 years as she patiently understood and shared my relationship with "the other woman," the College!

But it is a story that has less to do with me than with the ability of a community to take care of each other. That's a great gift. If I have regrets about The College of New Rochelle,

it's that the College is still too much of a secret. We must keep working at getting the word out; we're too much of a secret. It's not marketing. We market and market very well. We get the word out to students. That's not the issue. It's just too bad people don't know the quality of our life here on campus.

When we get new members of this community, people who join us after having spent years in other institutions, it is extraordinary to hear their comments about what a great working atmosphere this is, what a wonderful environment. I regret that more people don't know about us, and our model of doing business. We need to be more contagious.

So, my story of 35 years in this community is not a personal story. It is not my story. It is the story of a wonderful community of educational excellence that takes care of each other, including me, and it is the privilege of a lifetime to be part of this wonderful story. ■

If I have regrets about The College of New Rochelle, it's that the College is still too much of a secret. We must keep working at getting the word out.



Giving the thumbs up to the graduates of the Brooklyn Campus at their hooding

PUSHED AND PULLED: BEING UNIVERSITY TODAY

In June 2010, Dr. Stephen J. Sweeny delivered the keynote address during Alumnae/i College. The following is excerpted from those remarks.

As President of The College of New Rochelle, I am invited, sometimes elected, to represent the College in a variety of American higher education or charitable organizations. I am always honored to do so. It comes with the presidency. It comes with my wanting to tell the story of The College of New Rochelle. It also allows me to have a broader perspective on the university world.

Right now I'm a Commissioner on our regional accrediting body, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. I am a regular faculty member at the Harvard Institute for new university presidents. I'm an officer of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities. I am one of two Americans elected to the board of the International Federation of Catholic Universities. I serve on the board of two high schools and one other Catholic women's college, Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In the past, I have also served on other Catholic women's college boards. And I am on a Catholic social service agency and nursing home boards. These are very enriching opportunities for me, and, I believe, they make me be a better leader of this community.

From time to time I'm asked to reflect on all these experiences, to draw from it what's going on in the world around us. What is the context in which colleges and universities find themselves today?

The topic is: what is the context for being university in the world today?

I'm using the term "university" to be inclusive of colleges and universities. It's a technicality, because the truth is most of us are universities in the way we are structured. The State of New York and the State of Massachusetts are the only two states that do not permit a college like ourselves to use the term "university." All the rest of the states, long ago, by virtue of institutions being undergraduate and graduate and structured in schools, have termed most colleges as universities. So I'm going to use the word "university" to include colleges and universities as you and I know them.

A place to center ourselves for this discussion, this explication really, is Cardinal Newman. John Newman was an enormously gifted writer who wrote every sentence multiple times to give a precision of thought and economy to his communications.

After his conversion to Roman Catholicism, the Irish bishops invited him to establish the Catholic University of Ireland in Dublin. His great document, *The Idea of a University*, collected together all of his discourses in creating this university. It is one of his masterpieces. It is well worth the time to regularly review Newman's idea of the university.

What is a university? If I were asked to describe as briefly and as popularly as I could what a university was, I should draw my answer from its ancient designation of a *Studium Generale*, or a



Carrying the cross during a mass in Holy Family Chapel



Dr. Sweeney bestowed an honorary degree on Dr. Edmund Pellegrino, renowned medical ethicist, in 2008.



Each year, Dr. Sweeney presents honors and awards to dean's and honors list students during Family Weekend.

school of universal learning. This description implies the assembly of strangers from all parts into one spot. From all parts. How will you find professors and students from every department of knowledge? And in one spot, else how could there be any school at all.

Accordingly, in its simple and rudimental form, it is a school of knowledge of every kind, consisting of teachers and learners from every quarter. Many things are requisite to complete and satisfy the idea embodied in this description. But such as this, a university seems to be in its essence a place for the communication and circulation of thought by means of personal intercourse through a wide extent of country.

It's a place in which the intellect may safely range and speculate, sure to find its equal in some antagonistic activity and its judge in the tribunal of truth. It's a place, the university, where inquiry is pushed forward and discovery is verified and perfected, and rashness rendered innocuous and error exposed by the collision of mind with mind and knowledge with knowledge.

"It's a seat of wisdom, a light of the world, a minister of faith, an alma mater of the rising generation. It is this," concludes Newman, "and a great deal more, and demands a somewhat better hand and head," says Newman, "than mine to describe it well." And Newman concludes in his conversations with the Irish bishops, "Such is a university in its idea

and in its purpose. Such in good measure has it before now been, in fact. Shall it ever be again? We're going forward under the strength of the Cross, under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, and in the name of St. Patrick, to attempt it."

Glorious definition of the university.

The nobility of the enterprise of the university is also dramatically underscored in one of my favorite quotes by the poet laureate of England, John Masefield. Masefield said, "There are few earthly things more beautiful than a university where those who hate ignorance may strive to know, where those who perceive truth may strive to make others see. There are few earthly things more splendid."

What also comes to mind is Victor Hugo. This writer and social activist wrote: "There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world, an idea whose time has come."

Yes, the idea of the university is central to us as civilized human beings. Its idea came long ago. It came with the founding of the early universities in Salamanca, Bologna, Paris, and later at Oxford. Here begins the dramatically different manifestations of this idea through history, in our own lifetimes, and in our own nations, the different manifestations of the idea of the university.

If we had the time we could hear about the Universities of Bologna and Salamanca. We could hear about the transformation of the teaching/learning mode through history, which was basically one-on-one tutorials, which bowed to the simultaneous method of teaching/learning in groups, the precursors of our seminar model. The privileged of all kinds, of course, always had the tutors. But in Europe, for instance, the transformation of education to the simultaneous method promoted extraordinary general access to literacy and some computational functioning.



Dr. Sweeny leaves the inauguration ceremony in 1997 with Mauro C. Romita, then chair of the Board of Trustees

But the idea of the university, that “idea whose time has come,” endures—endures in a variety of forms and settings. And those of us called to promote the mission of this idea of the university into the future, need to navigate, need to negotiate, to borrow a word from my dear friend Sr. Alice Gallin, in her wonderful book—*Negotiating Identity*—need to negotiate and navigate the pushes and pulls of the society around us.

In our country, in our relatively recent history—within the last 300 or 400 years—two models of the university were developed. Thomas Jefferson understood the importance of education. He wrote, “that knowledge is power, that knowledge is safety, that knowledge is happiness.” In Jefferson’s lifetime there was no system of public education. Only the children of wealthy families could receive the tutoring required to attend a university. Only the wealthy members of society could achieve positions of leadership. Jefferson felt strongly that the control of power by the wealthy posed a threat to America’s democracy.

Jefferson, then, took his ideas and early experiences about education and concluded that the practice of housing students, faculty, classrooms, dining halls in some single, large building—which had been the case—was not a satisfactory arrangement. In fact, a university should not be a house, but should be a village, an “academical,” educational village. “Academical village” was Jefferson’s term.

So after retiring from the presidency, he thought about the ideal university. He even spent time designing it. He transformed those ideas into the

reality of the University of Virginia. He designed a university whose physical presence and course of studies would produce an educated citizenry capable of defending the freedom and democracy that he wanted in the United States.

Jefferson not only drew the architectural plans but also made the four-mile trip between his home, Monticello, and the university, on horseback, almost every day to oversee the construction. The elder statesman was attentive to detail as he was to the concept. He stipulated, for instance—I love this one—that the university’s bronze bell have an acoustical range of two miles.

The design of the University of Virginia was a quadrangle, with one end of the quadrangle missing and at one end of the quadrangle a huge, rotunda-like building which was architecturally copying the Pantheon in Rome. That was the library. It opened with 7,000 books. The two rows of buildings which came down from the Rotunda had a separate apartment for a faculty member on the second floor and underneath a room for that faculty member to meet with his classes—*his students*, of course.

This was a village unto itself. This

was a residential community where the life of the mind was to be primary and in whatever form teaching/learning took place. It was to be on that property, the educational, “academical” village.

You know the university that Jefferson founded, the prototype of the educational village. That model is very familiar to us. This model has prevailed in this country all these years. Students attend a residential program. In our lifetime we have seen universities more accepting of commuter students, but the model that has dominated has been the residential model, the university designed by Thomas Jefferson.

Let me illustrate a second university. This university has the largest student body in North America. Its website tells the story: a current enrollment of 420,000 undergraduate students and 78,000 graduate students. This American university has more than 200 campuses worldwide and confers degrees in over 100 degree programs at the associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral levels. It has an open admission policy requiring proof of a high school diploma, the GED or its equivalent. The school provides associate’s and bachelor’s degree applicants the opportunity for advanced



At the President's Circle dinner with Sally O'Hagan Fisher SAS'43 & Mary O'Hagan SAS'43



With the winner of the annual Strawberry Festival poster design contest Shervone Neckles SAS'02 in 1999

placement through a prior learning assessment program, whereby, aside from previous coursework, college credit can come from experiential learning essays, corporate training, and certificates or licenses.

You know it as the University of Phoenix. It is a private, for-profit institution of higher learning. It's a wholly-owned subsidiary of Apollo Group, Incorporated, which is a publicly-traded corporation on NASDAQ, an S&P 500 corporation based in Phoenix.

John Sperling, its founder, is quoted as saying that the university was, "a corporation, not a social entity. Coming here is not a rite of passage. We're not trying to develop students' value systems. We're going for that business of expanding their minds."

This online school, University of Phoenix, was the top recipient of student financial aid funds for the 2008 fiscal year, receiving nearly \$2.48 billion for students enrolled. Due to a great deal of political activity on their part, some of the regulations of the Department of Education in Washington have now accepted this model of university as fully the equal of a residential model.

Recently this headline appeared in

the news: "Wal-Mart to Offer its Workers a College Program." The first paragraph of the story read: "The purveyor of inexpensive jeans and lawnmowers is dipping its toe into the online education waters, working with a Web-based university to offer its employees in the United States affordable college degrees, a little bit more of the morphing of the University of Phoenix model."

My two models, with my Wal-Mart addendum, are meant to describe the spectrum of universities which constitute the American higher education scene today. It would appear that there is an enormous gulf between Charlottesville, Virginia and the ubiquitous University of Phoenix?

This is, nevertheless, American higher education today.

The vast majority of American students are not 18-22 years old. They are not experiencing the "academical village scene."

But the idea of the university, that "idea whose time has come," endures—endures in a variety of forms and settings. And those of us called to promote the mission of this idea of the university into the future, need to navigate, need to negotiate, to borrow a

word from my dear friend Sr. Alice Gallin, in her wonderful book—*Negotiating Identity*—need to negotiate and navigate the pushes and the pulls of the society around us. That is part of doing business today, and that is the title of this lecture, "Pushed and Pulled, Being University Today."

A headline recently in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* gives us a sense of the issues we are dealing with today:

"American Colleges Look to Private Sector for Global Recruiting."

It is an article about colleges turning over their recruitment to private corporations.

Another article reads:

"The Virginia Attorney General's Inquiry Could Cast a Chill over Scholarly Research."

This is a piece about a political agenda being pursued through the funding of research at Virginia. It is casting a pall over legitimate research.

Another headline:

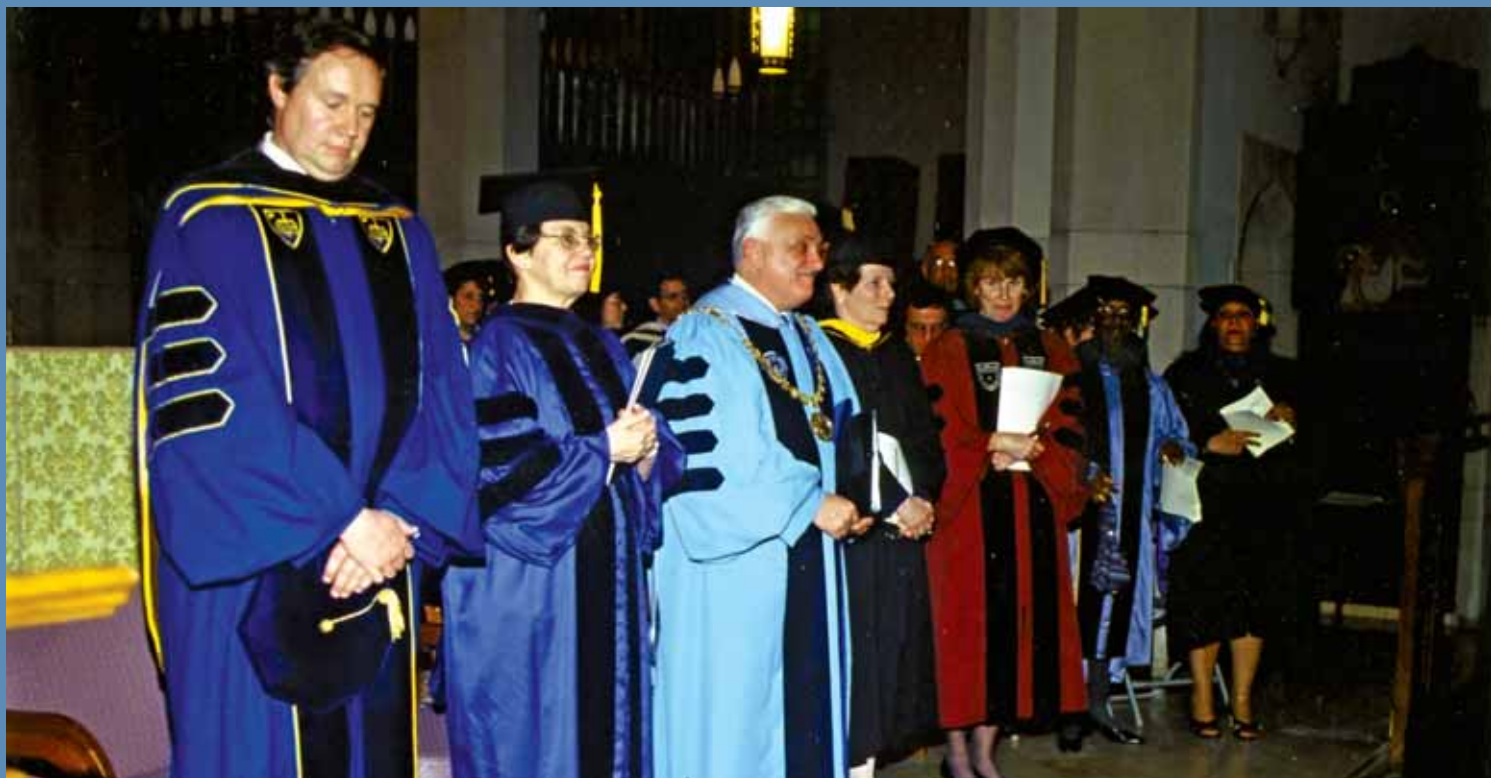
"Despite widespread support, Perkins loan program, that glorious assist to students in need, faces an uncertain future in Congress."

And then you may have seen this news account:

"Indefinite Strike Halts Classes and



Clockwise from top left: For many years while an administrator at the College, Dr. Sweeny taught a counseling course each semester in the School of New Resources • Speaking in Holy Family Chapel • Dr. Sweeny speaks with Sr. Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ and trustee Sr. Margaret Mary Kelleher, OSU as they process across campus to the final convocation of the Centennial year • At the School of Arts & Sciences Hooding in 2003 • Dr. Sweeny has received numerous awards, including in 2003 an award from the New Rochelle Police Foundation and an Honorable MEN-tion from the New York Women's Agenda.



A college degree is critically important for individual futures and for the future of the nation. That is why those of us in the university world believe it's worthwhile to endure the pushes and the pulls from the civic world.

Research at the University of Puerto Rico.”

The University of Puerto Rico is a very prestigious university, with 11 campuses. It has been shut down at times by these strikes and consequently could lose its accreditation because a university needs to be a fully functioning university to maintain its accreditation.

So universities are citizens of various concentric circles in the world. We are in the civic, the nation, and the world community. We're inextricably connected to what goes on in Congress, to what happens in our state legislatures, connected to New York City government, and, naturally, to our neighbors and government of the City of New Rochelle.

We can't throw up our hands in frustration and mock the dysfunctionality of government where it may exist. We don't have that choice. We have to be vigilant as a university about the public policy coming out of dysfunctionality. Some of the current public policy is toxic to American higher education, while some is enormously facilitating of our mission. As a president, a board, a university, we all have to stay alert and be focused on issues of public policy.

Here at The College of New Rochelle with our six full campuses, we need to be in contact with six members of Congress, two senators in the State of New York, six state assemblymen and assemblywomen, six state senators, members of the New York City Council, and the New Rochelle city government.

Our vigilance is particularly focused on issues of financial aid as 90 percent of our students are financial aid recipients. Legislative regulatory requirements change all the time in matters of

employment law, immigration, privacy, health and safety. University legal counsel today also is indispensable.

There is, of course, the large national scene that dominates the climate of universities. The change of administrations, severe recession, unprecedented federal stimulus package, continuing debate on healthcare reform, growing alarm at the size of the federal deficit, continuing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Middle East unrest, the war against terrorism. That is the climate in which universities find themselves, just as you as citizen find yourself.

And add to that mix, the economic turmoil in Europe, and God help us, our recent environmental disaster in the Gulf, our worst ever. How do universities get through all of this?

program, Race to the Top. It represents billions of dollars of federal stimulus money now available to the states through a grant application process, but in order to receive the grant certain educational policy criteria must be met. States must mandate evaluating teachers a certain way, must not have any restrictions in the number of charter schools possible in that state—a number of things like that to make a state eligible. The states are jumping as fast as they can to make these educational policy decisions, to be available for this federal money—in our case, New York State, \$700 million. It's very, very seductive and it is driving educational policy.

One thing of which I am certain is the continuing worth of the college degree. A college degree is critically



The Centennial year opened with a convocation in September 2003. Here Dr. Sweeny poses with New Rochelle Mayor Timothy Idoni, New York Lieutenant Governor Mary O'Connor Donohue SAS'68, Avery Cardinal Dulles, Dr. Mary Lyons, Antonia Novello, & Sr. Jean Baptiste Nicholson, OSU, Chair of the Board of Trustees.

In the civic world there are dramatic changes that are affecting higher education. For example, there is continued scrutiny by state and federal policymakers of our costs, our effectiveness, our accountability, and our degree production.

States are struggling financially to support higher education while the federal government has been using its borrowing power to spend billions of new dollars on education and research.

You have read about the new federal

important for individual futures and for the future of the nation. That is why those of us in the university world believe it's worthwhile to endure the pushes and the pulls from the civic world.

It is my belief that for some time to come, the life at the universities are going to be continually shaped by continuing pressures from the United States economy, heightened scrutiny of nonprofit organizations, and greater demands for accountability. The shortcomings of the nation's K-12



educational system will continually land on the doorstep of higher education institutions, and the demographically changing workforce needs to be provided with education appropriate to the needs of the 21st century. All of that is going to shape us. All of it does already shape us.

Universities, though, are also citizens of the higher education community itself. I report on this as a Commissioner of an accrediting body. One of my responsibilities as a Commissioner is to receive all the applications for “substantive change”—that’s the term—substantive

change in universities already accredited. In one three-month period, there are hundreds of requests for substantive changes in the 580 universities that make up the Middle States region.

There are many different requests for the approval of changes. For example, there are requests for contractual agreements and partnerships with corporations, with other universities, with for-profit organizations. There are requests for universities to begin additional locations, new campuses, new sites. There are requests for universities to have new degree levels, not just new individual programs.

Dominating the substantive change requests are alternate delivery methods. That is, for example, a college wishes to offer its whole nursing program online or run its whole school of business online. There are requests for new “campus” locations overseas. New York University, for example, has an enormous investment in a spectacular new campus in Abu Dhabi.

The explosion of technology is revolutionizing the teaching/learning environment. It’s cost-intensive, it’s training-intensive for faculty.

Also, the students are dramatically different in today’s world. The social



Photos from Top Left: Throughout his years as president, Dr. Sweeney has enjoyed a full social calendar, meeting and greeting a wealth of alumnae and friends of the College. He is pictured here (clockwise from opposite page top left) with: Gladys Irvins SNR'89 • Jelena Krstic SAS'10 & Christianne Russo Ricchi SAS'73 • Archie Bankston, former trustee, Ossie Davis, honorary degree recipient, & Rosa Barksdale SNR'75 • Reunioners in 2001 • Brother Jack Rathschmidt, OFM Cap., College Chaplain, as he left the College in 2002 • At the Centennial Gala with Anne Sweeney SAS'79, Indra Nooyi, Sandra Priest Rose GS'77, Mercedes Ruehl SAS'69, & Valerie Salembier SNR'73 • Mary Hogan Hearle SAS'56, GS'87 • Dr. Barbara Wismer McManus SAS'64 as he presents her with a Centennial medal • Catherine Henry McCabe SAS'47 & Ann Dowd Connolly SAS'52, two of the Angela Merici medalists in 2002.

networking activity is, frankly, mind-blowing, starting with Facebook, and all of the other allied forms of networking. It is the reality of education today. And as educators we must accept the responsibilities that come with it. What do I mean?

Well, I speak of the indiscriminate use of information—as if it were gospel!—because it appears on the Internet. Faculty members have to deal with this regularly. The change in the role of the faculty member in higher education from expert standing in front of a class—transmitting that information that the faculty member

possesses—to an evolution to facilitator, where the faculty member is the guide, the director of the acquisition of information, and the arbiter of what is good, solid, factual information versus what is basically made up.

The third and last concentric circle in which we operate, is the Catholic Church. We proudly claim our place as Catholic college, as Catholic university. The context inside the Church brings its own problems, its own challenges, its own opportunities.

John Paul II in 1990 issued a thoughtful, affirming document defining Catholic higher education called

Ex Corde Ecclesiae, “From the Heart of the Church.” Catholic universities are born out of the heart of the Church.

Today is the era of Joseph Ratzinger, our Pope Benedict, who has a very long solid history as theologian, teacher, bishop. I think it’s fair to say what we are experiencing now is a broad social agenda for the Church, and a narrower liturgical, doctrinal agenda than we have been experiencing. Pope Benedict today is described as seeking reform of the reform.

One has to acknowledge that the moral voice of the Church is muffled by controversy and scandal. As we

were growing up, when there was a moral issue, we immediately turned to the voice of the Church for clarification. It is not happening today.

Our Church in North America is fragmented.

The U.S. context, and I know this from sitting around at the board table with colleagues from around the world—there are 18 of us on the board of the International Federation, two or three from each continent—and I describe our situation because part of this is to be experiencing universal Church and to be comfortable with knowing what's going on. Ours, in North America, is a Church fragmented. One has to say that, as evidenced by the reactions to the President of the United States at Notre Dame University.

And so in describing that to inter-

mous issues of survival of the Church in Asia and in Africa, in interacting with the Muslim world, in interacting with the fundamentalists who want to shut them down in India and so on.

There are changes of demographics within the American Church. By the year 2050, half the American Church will be Hispanic, and church institutions need to be prepared for that.

The decline of religious personnel is obvious to us all. So is the decline in level of religious formation, and the attitudes of Catholic people, and the change of the attitudes for the question has become: Am I really more comfortable being “spiritual” than I am in being “religious.” That’s one of the attitudinal changes—measurable—in American Catholic people, and worth a great deal of discussion.

The level of education of Catholic

forces. We’re pushed and pulled.

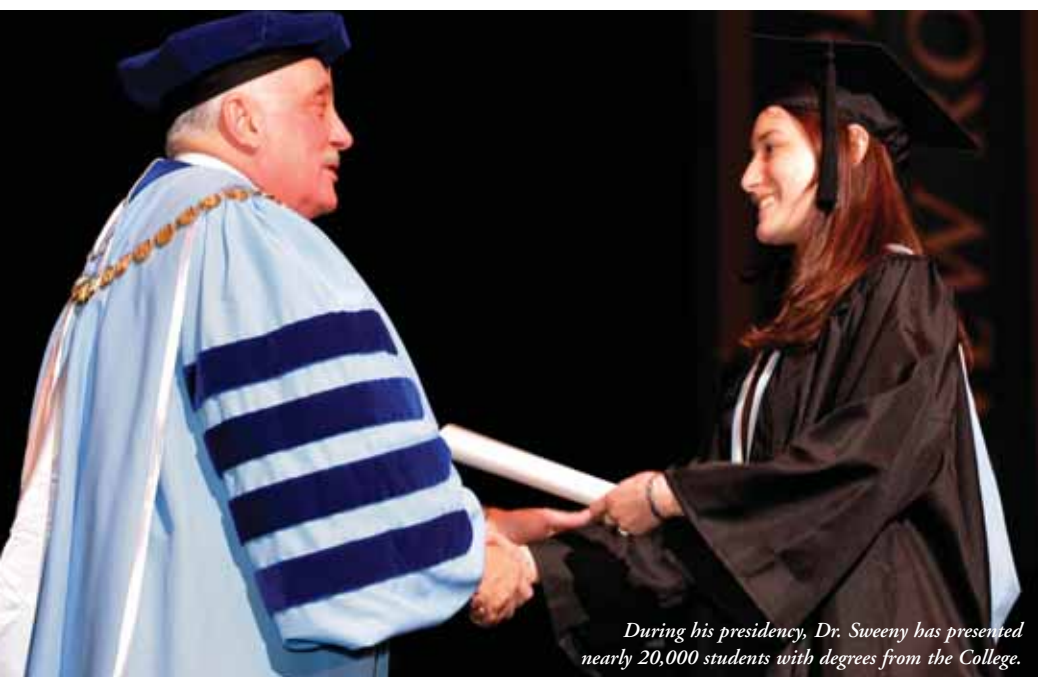
Maybe we always were pushed and pulled, but I think it’s pushed and pulled now more than any time in our American history. To live, of course, is to change and to change often, so we navigate, we negotiate, we accommodate. But I do think Newman would be astounded. Mr. Jefferson, too, would seek today in vain for his “academic village,” when he looked around the American higher educational scene.

I want to provide you with one other illustration of a university. This university is 107 years old. Primarily a teaching institution, it confers undergraduate and master’s level degrees. Ten percent of its student body is aged 18-22; 90 percent are adults, 22 years on to almost 90, returning to higher education after some time lapse, either for the first undergraduate degree—that’s the vast majority—or a master’s degree, which for many is an important professional credential. Some come for a second degree. Some come for a post-master’s education. This university, in the fall of 2009, had a student body of just under 5,000.

In the university of which I speak, the student body comes principally from a 50-mile radius, which has been true for most of its history, from students from a variety of states and countries on the international scene. In addition to the diversity of age, already described, this university’s student body is diverse in color and ethnic background, socioeconomic status and religion. It’s diverse in preparation for college, and although never surveyed, one would surmise in this student body there’s a diversity in sexual orientation consistent with the general population.

Residence is provided for the 18- to 22-year-old student. Fewer than 300 live on campus, but of the traditional age population, this is about 60 percent—which has been pretty typical of this university’s history.

For curricular program reasons, the university is structured in schools. There are four, each led by an academic dean and each with its own standing faculty and instructional staff. The library, too, is led by a dean and



During his presidency, Dr. Sweeney has presented nearly 20,000 students with degrees from the College.

national colleagues, it is a source of confusion because in the other continents of the world they don’t ever expect the world leader to necessarily be functioning within the moral tradition of the Church, and they still have to continue interactions. So it was really surprising for them to hear the discussion around the President’s visit and honorary degree at Notre Dame, and they all said that it described a fragmented Church and said they don’t have that. What they have are enor-

people is very advanced. We’re able to think through a great deal of complex, complicated issues without having to be directed. It changes the nature of who we are. It changes our universities.

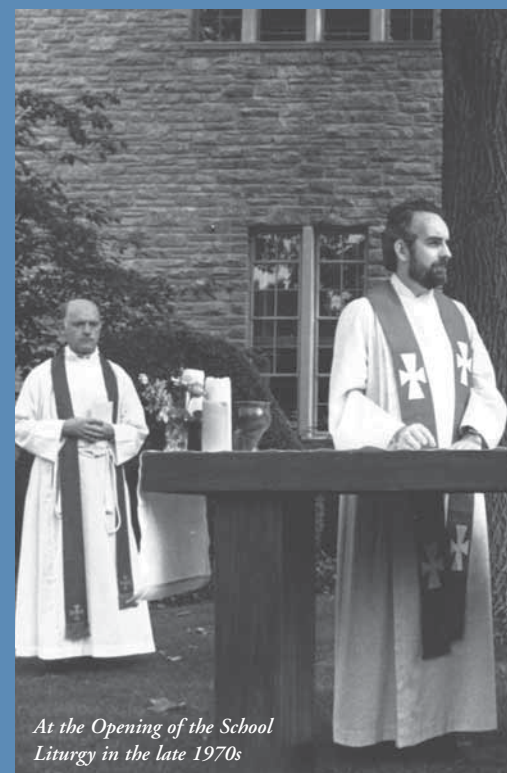
As I said, the university is shaped by the concentric circles around it. That’s my point. I use the word “shaped.” It’s probable that there are better words. Sometimes the university is built up by those things. Sometimes we’re torn down; sometimes we are extinguished, the university, by those



Clockwise from top left: Presenting Senator George Mitchell with the Pope John XXIII Medal with Anne Sweeney SAS'79 in 2007 • With Joan Bristol, Vice President for Student Services, and Tara O'Neill SAS'98 • With Sr. Regina Kehoe, OSU SAS'56, GS'88 & Michael Ambler, Chair of the Board of Trustees • Part of the procession in Holy Family Chapel • Among his many roles, Dr. Sweeney has served as Chair of the Board of Trustees at Convent of the Sacred Heart school in Greenwich, CT; here he presents a graduate with a degree from the school in 2010 • At the dedication of Gill Library with Joseph LeVaca, Jean Fuhrman, Christopher Fuhrman, & Elizabeth Bell LeVaca, daughter of Mary Fischer Bell SAS'34.



So altogether, from 1908 to now, 49,400 degrees conferred. Because I personally sign every diploma, a very sacred, religious thing for me as President, I ask, "How many have I signed in my 13 years as President?" So from July 1, 1997 to today, I have signed 19,945.



staffed by librarians, who are considered full members of the faculty.

The teaching/learning activity takes place at six full campuses, one principal campus and five branch campuses. This university offers its full degree programs at the branch campuses, as is authorized. These campuses are located where the university students live and work, thus facilitating access to higher education.

By now you have suspected that I'm describing The College of New Rochelle—a model, not a perfect model to be sure, but a model of adaptation to the signs of the times.

Our whole history is one of adaptation and change, never more so than the years since 1969. In the year 1969, in an atmosphere ripe for creativity and experimentation, the State Education Department invited us to take our undergraduate strengths and to expand them to master's level work, particularly in art, psychology, education. The State Education Department wanted and our faculty was eager to be experimental.

Within quick order, after establishing master's programs, the 1970s brought for us the invitation to take the liberal arts program, which we were both keeping as our traditional

women's program and experimenting at the same time on this campus, and offer it for adult women.

Very quickly, within weeks really, having had that in place, the District Council 37 Municipal Employees Union said to us, "Would you offer that program for our members, your liberal arts BA program for our members, where we work?"

And if our workers in DC-37 lived in Co-op City in the Bronx, why couldn't they have the program there, where they live?

So we began at Co-op City. And very soon, taking a preexisting program from another college, we began in the South Bronx, what is now the John Cardinal O'Connor Campus. Adults, coming back for a full baccalaureate degree in liberal studies. Then, New York Theological, a wonderful part of our mission, prepared neighborhood/community clergy with an undergraduate degree. The Rosa Parks Campus in Harlem came out of the request of community activists to make a contribution of education to the Harlem community.

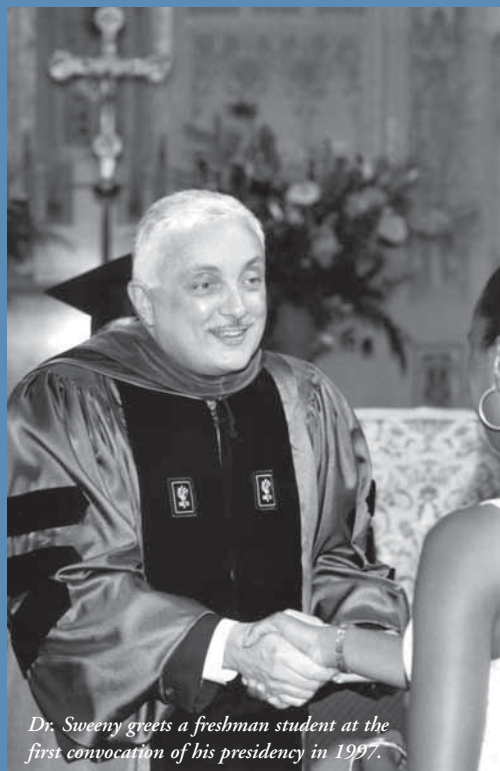
And there's also the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Plaza, where in the heart of that wonderful Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration community,

there's a full four-year college program, our Brooklyn Campus.

Next, and by 1976, we were thinking of a School of Nursing. The diploma schools all around us were closing and nurses wanted a bachelor's degree in nursing as the credential of choice. We started with that encouragement. First we began with the generic program, the post-secondary degree. Then we admitted RN's, coming back for the BSN. Now, we have a master's in nursing, a new post-master's, and second degree programs.

It's astounding to hear our graduation statistics. From our first graduation in 1908 with nine graduates, to our most recent, on May 27, 2010, The College of New Rochelle has conferred 49,435 degrees. The College conferred about 9,500 degrees in its total history from 1908 to 1971. The number from 1971 to now has simply grown by leaps and bounds. In May of 2010 at Radio City we graduated 1,204.

So altogether, from 1908 to now, 49,400 degrees conferred. Because I personally sign every diploma, a very sacred, religious thing for me as President, I ask, "How many have I signed in my 13 years as President?" So from July 1, 1997 to today, I have signed 19,945. From the School of



Dr. Sweeney greets a freshman student at the first convocation of his presidency in 1997.



With Brother Tyrone Davis, CFC, Director of the Archdiocese of New York's Office of Black Ministry, after presenting him with a Centennial medal in 2004

Nursing, from the Graduate School, from the School of Arts & Sciences, from the School of New Resources, and one more graduating class, the Class of 2011, my graduation class to go.

These are important statistics in talking about the life of higher education today, its many manifestations, our experimentation. The past 40 years have been marked for us with expansion and diversification, I think dramatic response to the signs of the times while being faithful to mission. So literally, my last word is about mission.

People ask me, "How do you keep this all together?" Me, yes, the College Community. The diversity that I've described, the pushing and the pulling, the expansion and diversification, how does this all hold together, six campuses, the dispersion geographically—how do you keep it all together? And there really is a very quick, very solid answer. And the answer is around faithfulness to mission. This year, the Ursulines celebrate 475 years. Literally, on November 25, 2010, it was 475 years since the foundress, St. Angela, gathered her first followers to sign the book of the Company pledging to stay together, coming together each day from their homes and then going back

out into the streets after praying and meditating together, to take care of basically women and children committed to the full development of these people. We draw from those 475 years of commitment to the full development of people.

Out of our history we've named non-negotiables that have to be present for us to be truly The College of New Rochelle, manifested in many different ways over the 107 years. But these non-negotiables need to be present 25 years from now, 100 years from now. We call these our non-negotiables. We're talking about our mission: the primacy of the liberal arts, that is, a full, solid, liberal arts and sciences education. That's the Ursuline animating spirit which we draw from their history—the commitment to the full development of people.

We have a special commitment to women. That's one of our non-negotiables. By law we are only allowed to be single sex in the School of Arts & Sciences, which predates the change of the law. Any educational programs after that date—professional, graduate, new programs—have to be coeducational. And the ethos of the College continues the special commitment to women.

And we are Catholic. Faith and rea-

son walk together. We find strength and nourishment from the Catholic intellectual tradition, from the Catholic moral tradition, from the Catholic social justice tradition. That's where we draw our strength. That's a non-negotiable. And we are committed to the building of community. Community now in the world in which we live drawn from diversity. And all of that in our commitment to students prepares them to be leaders, prepares them to be not simply coping with the world around them, but changing the world, getting at societal change as an important outcome of their education with us.

It's the commitment to those non-negotiables which we call mission. It is the commitment to drawing our strength from the history of the 475 years of the Ursulines that sustains us and makes this possible, makes possible a rational reaction to the pushes and pulls of being university today. And so I say, as I say regularly to the faculty and staff, here at the College, you're not here for a job. There are easier ways to make money. You're here because it's a vocation, it's a calling. And this is hallowed territory. That's how we handle the pushes and the pulls: being university today. ■

By

Joan Bailey, Ph.D.

Vice President for Mission & Identity

In the more than three decades I have journeyed with Steve he has been for me a mentor, teacher, leader, colleague, and friend.

Always the eloquent educator whose moral compass, grounded in faith, unwaveringly points to justice and integrity, the Stephen Sweeny I have come to know uses the bully pulpit to remind and inspire. In the more than three decades I have journeyed with Steve he has been for me a mentor, teacher, leader, colleague, and friend. We were each drawn to The College of New Rochelle by its mission and its daily commitment to realizing that mission which has grown from and continues to be inspired by our Ursuline Catholic beginnings. Decisions about new programs, about resource allocation, or about solutions to problematic situations in the various corners of the institution always were to be evaluated in light of consistency with mission. The choice of building design of The Wellness Center, for example, included the consideration not only of functions but also of honoring the existing campus design and architecture. So the architect who had so successfully redesigned the Gill Library was used to create an organic design for the campus which would honor the diagonal direction that moves from Library,

honoring the life of the mind, passing the Chapel, honoring the life of the spirit to the corner where The Wellness Center would honor development of the physical dimension of the students as well as that of faculty and staff.

I first experienced the educational social justice dimension of the mission of The College of New Rochelle when I became an adjunct at the District Council 37 Campus of the School of New Resources. Here was a baccalaureate liberal arts degree program for adults historically underserved by the higher education in the liberal arts. Demanding outcomes for students were accompanied by compassionate and adult-friendly structures to support student success. Here was an institution that enacted a mission to provide liberating education to students who would be treated with justice and dignity as equal persons on the educational journey. Their journey, joined with the expertise of professionals, was designed to provide a solid foundation for the full development of their talents and for their continued learning throughout life, always attentive to giving back to the surrounding society. Soon I also experienced the larger CNR Community similarly engaged in realizing the mission and motivated to educate students, especially women, who have not had equal access and appropriate environmental support to fully reach their potential. Becoming part of this community felt so fulfilling!

For me it got better when I heard Steve's eloquent Opening of Year speech the next September. Each year he effectively conveyed the message—the lesson—that in every corner of the institution every job is meaningful and essential to the education of our students. Each of us is pursuing a vocation in education. Each is engaged “in a sacred calling and this is hallowed ground.” Indeed it is!

First and foremost an educational institution, The College of New Rochelle has benefitted greatly from Steve's commitment to the primacy of academic excellence, accomplished most effectively through the education of the whole student. The faculty and their various curricula are central to the student's educational journey, but all members of this community are always modeling and exemplifying characteristics and behaviors for student learning: civility and respect for



In his role then as Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs with SAS Dean Sue Wesselkamper, GS Dean Laura Ellis, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Joan Bailey, & SN Dean Connie Vance

Dr. Sweeny plants a tree in front of the new home of the School of Nursing offices at 4 Hemlock Place in 1998 with SN Dean Connie Vance, Sr. Dorothy Ann Kelly, then Chancellor, & Dr. Joan Bailey, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

each student and colleague acknowledging the individual person with whom we are interacting. His regular reminder that we often fail but are committed to continue to try to improve prods each of us beyond the momentary lapses.

I think I am able to speak for many colleagues when I say that in many ways his positions and proposed solutions to problems are anticipated before we even discuss them with him. Given his primary commitment to student-centered learning and academic freedom consonant with the policy of the American Association of University Professors and more importantly his own deep sense of integrity and justice, the next steps, the solutions are clear even if difficult to take. But I have never known Steve to avoid difficult dialogue; rather he encourages everyone present at such times to share their thoughts so that no one leaves the room with positions or perspectives unshared. If left unshared, the sense of community and shared understanding is endangered. When aired and acknowledged and discussed openly, differences often are subsumed into common understandings. In any case there are no hidden barriers to collegiality.

Perspicacious and wise, I always found him to be a great listener. Having heard the perspectives of others, he would ask the questions that would lead to seeing the bigger picture where new implications and unintended consequences and their values might be explored and explicated. This special gift of wise perspicacity has benefitted myriad colleagues at CNR and in the many arenas he has generously served with distinction: boards of several Catholic schools and colleges, the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, the International Federation of Catholic Universities, and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Universities to name just a few. His generous gifts of service



have been continuous during these years. And from each he also learns and brings to each new situation the lessons learned from his broad experience. I and the rest of the College have been beneficiaries of this broadened perspective. What is remarkable about this grand sweep of view is that at the same time Steve holds in his attention the details of events and more especially the people who are part of them. He never fails to amaze as he asks after a certain relative who had been ill, or won an award, when he meets someone he has not seen for several years! Prodigious memory! I have believed he has a photographic memory and speed reads since details of documents, books and manuscripts seem to miraculously come to him on the spur of the moment, while I must dig deep in memory and am sometimes unable to find the name or the detail which he subsequently produces. And yet he has been patient, perhaps because we are so equally engaged in the journey of fulfilling the mission of The College of New Rochelle and the vocation which we share with our colleagues here. It has been a grand journey thus far, inspired and enlarged by Steve's perspicacity and wisdom, and it is only appropriate that the College's tag line is "Wisdom for life."

I would wish Steve a future filled with the very joy and satisfaction I have enjoyed in these years and thank him profusely for providing the leadership which has allowed so many of us to learn, grow, and flourish. ■

The Library and Wellness Center projects not only embody the values and identity of the CNR Community, they also contain the vision, enthusiasm, and passion of Steve who deeply loves this institution. Steve is one of a few who believe in the power of art and architecture to transform lives. His sensitivities and insight in the role of the built environment is remarkable. He is a great leader and friend and I am so privileged to have had the opportunity to work with him.

JOSEPH TATTONI
AIA Principal, ikon.5 architects

By

Ann Peterson, OSU
Superior, Convent of St. Teresa

Steve is imbued with the spirit of Angela and the mission of our College.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my thoughts on this occasion. I will begin by saying, on behalf of my fellow Ursuline sisters, that we are very appreciative of Dr. Stephen Sweeny's leadership at CNR. He has carried forth the legacy entrusted to him by so many Ursulines through the years, especially his predecessor, Sr. Dorothy Ann Kelly.

Steve loves the Ursulines and is always genuinely concerned with how we are doing. But it is more than just that. He has spent most of his adult life here at CNR and has such a sense of Ursuline value. He is imbued with the spirit of Angela and the mission of our College.

I joined the Ursulines before graduating CNR in 1962 and currently serve as Superior at the Convent of St. Teresa in New Rochelle, as well as on the Order's Leadership Team, Eastern Province. I was invited to join the CNR Board in 2002, and it has been a very positive experience, being brought into a world of young people and of people who are dedicated to change.

Knowing Steve and watching his influence on our College has also been enormously inspiring. When I think of Steve I see a person of deep commitment to the Church, a person of faith and integrity, hope and insight.

I see a person who genuinely appreciates others, and is very present to them. When you are talking with Steve, you have his full attention and concern, no matter who you are.

I see a skilled communicator, especially when it comes to expressing the mission of the College, both internally and to the wider community such as parents, alumnae/i, or business leaders.

And I see someone with a seemingly boundless energy and enthusiasm for all that goes on at CNR. He cares for every aspect of life at each campus. He's interested in the lives of faculty, students, and staff. He can deal with a wide range of issues and challenges without letting it all pull him down.

Truly it's a challenge to be a college president today, but Steve brings everything together in a way that helps people see a purpose. That's one reason I enjoy being on the board—I can see the *meaning* of CNR: education for women, wisdom for the whole person, mind-body-spirit. And Steve has done so much to engender this in the projects he has worked to make happen.

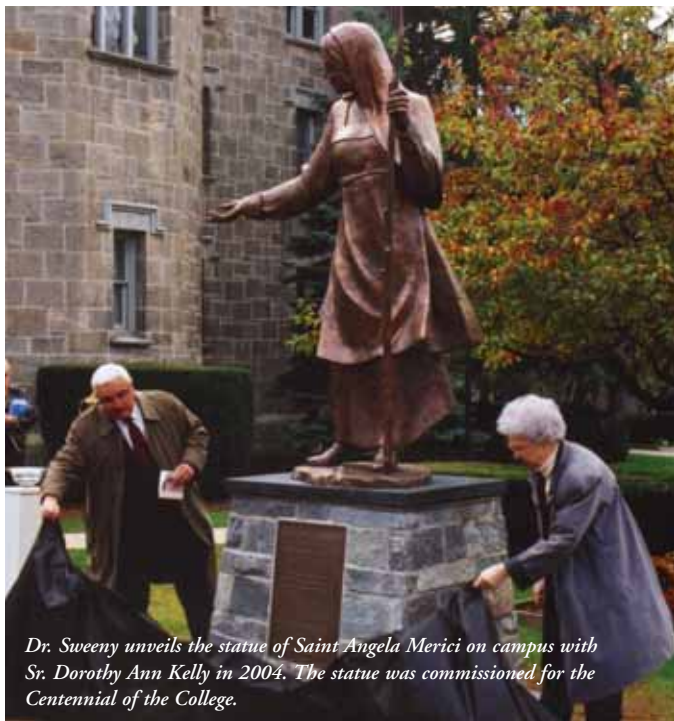
I see it at the Mother Irene Gill Library, which has become a top-quality research facility.

I see it in the renovations at Holy Family Chapel, which has been the center of worship for generations of students.

And I see it in The Wellness Center, with its classes and places for quiet meditation, as well as its facilities for physical



Dr. Sweeny enters Holy Family Chapel with Archbishop Timothy Dolan in November 2010 for the mass celebrating the 475th Anniversary of the founding of the Order of St. Ursula.



Dr. Sweeny unveils the statue of Saint Angela Merici on campus with Sr. Dorothy Ann Kelly in 2004. The statue was commissioned for the Centennial of the College.

fitness and the healthy competition of intercollegiate sports. We knew it would be a big endeavor, especially in this economy, but Steve stayed focused. He realized the College really needed this to stay in the forefront and attract new students.

But whatever changes take place, Steve always remains focused on our tradition and identity. What do we stand for? What does it mean to be a Catholic college? Under his guidance, the curriculums at all four of our schools have enhanced their emphasis on moral and spiritual values.

At board meetings we hear from administrators, staffers, or teachers, and I am struck by how they discuss the curriculum or the campus environment in terms of enhancing the mission of the College. It's not just words on paper, and I believe this starts with the tone Steve sets. He even instituted the new position of VP for Mission and Identity, to help make what we stand for more visible and tangible.

I think another key accomplishment is the stronger sense of connection Steve has helped foster among all four schools, a sense of how the liberal arts and career preparation can work hand in hand.

And especially through SNR, we are doing more to make education accessible to those who might otherwise miss out—which is all very much in the spirit of the Ursulines and of CNR's foundress, Mother Irene.

Steve brings that spirit to work with him every day. But I especially enjoy watching on graduation day, as he hands out every diploma and shakes every hand. You can just see the connection he has with our students, the joy and pride he shares with them all. ■

Stephen Sweeny had the ability to listen closely to the ideas of others, see the needs of the College, set new goals, and act with decisiveness and warmth. He also brought to the office of President his own deep sense of ethical morality and public service both of which were strongly consonant with the original mission of The College of New Rochelle.

SANDRA PRIEST ROSE GS'77

Steve, in my estimation, is a raconteur of the highest order—and that order extends beyond any of the cloth. Of incomparable and uncommon rectitude, he has always been fair in his judgments and more than generous with his praise for me and my wife [Elza Dinwiddie-Boyd, Dean of the School of New Resources]. It has been an immense pleasure and privilege to spend time with him, and even more so on those special moments to be at his table and within earshot of his wealth of stories. He is a peerless speaker before an audience and even more engaging one-on-one. I will miss his invitations, his company, and his wisdom, and I know I'm not alone in these sentiments.

HERB BOYD

Author, Journalist, and Adjunct Professor, School of New Resources

By
Elizabeth Sweeny Block

Nearly 14 years ago, when Dad was inaugurated as the College's twelfth president, it was an extraordinarily special, proud moment for our family.

The College of New Rochelle has been a central part of my family's life for 35 years, and we have lived here as part of this community for just about all of my life. We deeply love this college, our second home. I live in Chicago now with my husband, Jeff, but we cherish the opportunity to return to campus as often as possible. I have been told that College faculty and staff waited eagerly for news of my birth on December 12, 1979, and so I know that right from the start I was a member of the CNR family. As a child, the Castle was a place of great wonder and excitement for me, a magical place to visit and explore. From a young age, I attended Commencement nearly every year and marveled at the sea of caps and gowns, the beautiful music, the profound speeches. I was baptized, confirmed, and married at Holy Family Chapel, a particularly special place for me. It was a significant moment in my life when, at age six, I was given the responsibility and honor of placing baby Jesus in the manger before Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, a rite of passage for those of us who grew up in the College Community. When I returned to our pew, I am told, I promptly fell sound asleep! Until I left home for my own college experience, my parents and I worshiped every Sunday in this community; they still do. The Sweeny family has celebrated many momentous occasions with our College of New Rochelle family, and these are memories we treasure.

Nearly 14 years ago, when Dad was inaugurated as the College's twelfth president, it was an extraordinarily special, proud moment for our family. I represented the Sweeny family in providing the College and my father with counsel on this momentous occasion, and I, of course, welcomed the opportunity to give advice to my dad, in front of hundreds of people, no less! Drawing on three books that are among Dad's favorites—*The Wind in the Willows*, *The Giving Tree* and *Le Petit Prince*—I offered both Dad and the College words of wisdom for the journey on which they were about to embark. I began then by recognizing the significance of these three works of fiction as stories that offer profound lessons and change the world forever for their readers. It seems only fitting that I now return to these reflections, remember the wishes I offered for Dad and College, and renew my hopes for them in the next part of their journey.



With wife Barbara and daughter Elizabeth at the College's Dinner Dance in 1997

The 1908 Kenneth Graham classic *The Wind in the Willows* follows the adventures of Mr. Toad and his friends Badger, Ratty, and Mole through their life on a bucolic riverbank. Toad presides over his ancestral home, Toad Hall. Through a series of mishaps and adventures, it is always a place of good cheer and good companionship, a center of frenetic, rollicking activity, and not infrequently, some serious risk-taking, but all in the pursuit of goodness, truth, and a good time. As Dad began his presidency, I wished him and the College an exciting, fulfilling life together in their own Toad Hall. I know it to be true that Dad and his college family have shared good cheer and companionship, have dreamed big and taken risks, and have pursued goodness and truth. Dad's commitment to education is not just a job; it is his passion, and he has pursued it with joy, spirit, and a sense of humor that is truly contagious. My wish for you now, dear College and dear Dad, is that you carry on as joyfully and passionately in your next adventures, never taking yourselves too seriously.

Shel Silverstein's masterpiece *The Giving Tree* is the powerful description of generous service, even to the point of total self-giving of tree to boy as boy becomes man and then old man. Fourteen years ago, I wished that the College and Dad would bring out the best in each other, their best and

deepest instincts, particularly generous service to others. Needless to say, generous service to others is what best characterizes CNR and my dad. Dad has always been selflessly committed to transforming the world through education, dedicated to enabling every individual to achieve her or his full potential and reaching out to those who might not otherwise have had such an opportunity. The College and my dad bring out this generosity in each other, and together they have made a difference in the lives of people too numerous to count. My wish today, dear College and dear Dad, is that this generosity and spirit of service that you have brought out in each other continue to grow and deepen. May this be part of the outstanding legacy of your partnership, dear College and dear Dad.

Finally, on the occasion of Dad's inauguration, I referred to the French classic *Le Petit Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the timeless statement of ageless truths and values. You may know the scene: the fox asks the little prince to tame him, and, in reply, the little prince, a visitor from his own planet asks, "What does that mean, tame?" "It is an act too often neglected," said the fox, "it means to establish ties." "To establish ties?" "Just that," said the fox. "If you tame me, then we shall need each other. To me, you will be unique in all the world. To you, I shall be unique in all the world. Men have forgotten this truth," said the fox, "but you must not forget it. You become responsible forever for what you have tamed." Fourteen years ago, I wished for the College and Dad the profound relationship that the fox and prince sought in taming and fidelity in all their commitments. Anyone can see that indeed the College and Dad have tamed each other. For the Sweeny family, the College is unique in all the world, a place unlike any other filled with people that are our family; it is our home. For the College, Steve

Dr. Sweeny with his daughter Elizabeth, wife Barbara, & Sr. Dorothy Ann Kelly



Sweeny is unique in all the world, a dedicated servant for 35 years who has left an indelible mark on the community. The College and Dad are forever bound by a profound relationship of service to others and forever changed because of the love they have for one another. My wish for you today, dear College and dear Dad, is that you cherish this unique relationship always. You have tamed each other.

As I reflect on Dad's years as President of The College of New Rochelle, my initial observation on the day of his inauguration takes on new significance: just as these three classic stories change the world forever for their readers, and in much the same way that the *Wind in the Willows* gang, the tree and the boy, and the little prince and the fox were all changed forever by knowing and loving each other, so too are the College and my dad changed forever and for the better as a result of caring so deeply for each other all these years. I continue to wish for you both, dear College and dear Dad, good companionship and good cheer, generosity and service, and profound relationship and fidelity. May you continue to bring out in others the same joy and passion you brought out in each other. Dad, your presidency has been a wonderful part of CNR's history. You make us all so very proud. ■

We, the Franciscan Handmaids of Mary, salute Dr. Stephen Sweeny. This man of God embodies the spirit, vision, zeal, and compassion of the Ursuline Sisters, who founded this great teaching institution. The leadership, influence, and concern of this consummate educator, go far beyond the confines of The College of New Rochelle, its many campuses and partnerships. We are grateful that the education of our Sisters and our ministry at St. Benedict's Day Nursery are a part of his interest, concern, and largesse. Wherever he goes, whatever he does, our love and prayers will be with him. We know that Dr. Sweeny will continue to be a 'dedicated, visionary educator' as he lives.

SR. LORETTA THERESA RICHARDS,
FHM

By

Michael Galligan-Stierle, Ph.D.

President, Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

Steve has come to be regarded as one of the truly significant leaders in Catholic higher education, not just in New York but internationally.

If you happen to be touring Rome with Dr. Stephen Sweeny, be sure to budget yourself plenty of extra time.

As president of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, it's my yearly honor to lead a small delegation to The Vatican, to discuss issues of higher education with members of the papal cabinet, the Curia. As an ACCU trustee and member president, Steve has taken part in two of these journeys.

As we walk the Eternal City, I am always struck by the deep understanding Steve has of the Church's rich history. You might be touring some cathedral or piazza, and Steve will bring up points that not even the tour guide is aware of. And he will connect these points with larger concepts that speak to the heart of Catholic education.

But even more striking is Steve's knack for making the *human* connection. It never fails on these tours that you will run into some delay and look around, wondering what the holdup might be—and it will be Steve, stopping to laugh and talk with some passerby who happened to recognize him. It might be a cardinal, a fellow educator, a member of the Ursulines, or another religious order. People just gravitate toward him.

Of the hundreds of deans and presidents I know, Steve's range of relationships is extraordinary—and it's not just small talk. Steve has come to be regarded as one of the truly significant leaders in Catholic higher education, not just in New York but internationally.

I don't think even the people who love him at The College of New Rochelle fully recognize how he has helped position the College as a shining example of what Catholic education can accomplish. CNR is greatly known and appreciated.

Based in Washington, DC, the ACCU's primary goal is serving our more than 200 member colleges—to help them strengthen their Catholic identities, for the good of the school, the Church, and the society. We also work worldwide with the International Federation of Catholic Universities, the IFCU.

Steve has been one of the 18 school presidents who make up our board, and also serves on the board at IFCU, so he



In 2000, Dr. Sweeny had the honor to be a reader at a mass in St. Peter's Square.

has a keen eye not only for U.S. Catholic education but is engaged at the highest level around the world.

I've known Steve for 10 years, from when I served with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops as their point person on higher-ed issues. It was a natural move to the ACCU, where I was VP for four years.

Personally and professionally, I am greatly indebted to Steve. It was at his initiative and encouragement that I applied to become ACCU president when that post became open. He was



At the Vatican Observer's residence in New York City are (from left): Bill Damato, Dr. Joan Bailey, Vice President for Mission & Identity, Barbara Sweeny, President-elect Judith Huntington, Archbishop Francis A. Chullikatt, Apostolate Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, Dr. Sweeny, William Hambleton, President of LaSalle Academy in New York City, & Dr. Ellen Curry Damato, Executive Vice President.

the one who saw my gifts and abilities in a way I myself had not yet envisioned.

This speaks to his remarkable ability to see things in others, see ways others can serve and grow, see qualities they do not yet realize. I've observed his way of doing this with people from CNR.

I am also indebted to the way Steve gives freely of his talents at ACCU, especially when a member school needs help. He has a way of bringing a fresh set of eyes to a difficult situation. He's good at seeing that we can't solve everything, but we can move forward, create an opportunity. He doesn't come in like a big PR specialist, he simply will say, "That person is a friend of mine and I'm going to reach out."

Roughly half of our member presidents are lay people, others are priests or in a religious order. While many emphasize the executive dimension of their job, Steve is someone who at an early age felt a *spiritual* call from God to serve. He appreciates in a dynamic and essential way the need for Catholic higher education to connect with the universal vision of the Church.

What also shines through clearly is Steve's appreciation for the religious order that founded the College. The Ursulines are not just a concept to him, they are people he loves, and he wants the world to know what a difference they are making. You can hear it in the way he cares and talks about them as individuals.

I recall, for example, how Steve would discuss his admiration for Sr. Alice Gallin, the longtime CNR educator and trustee who also served 16 years as executive director at the ACCU. He suggested I drop by and meet Sr. Alice, and I'm glad I did. He did not have to bluntly tell me, "She can coach and mentor you." He simply let his own deep respect for the person guide me to her, and to the wisdom she could provide.

This is one of Steve's great abilities with people—to help you grow into something without ever feeling like it is outside your range. ■

Dr. Stephen Sweeny is a remarkable leader in higher education. His influence is profound for those of us who call him friend and colleague. Steve has the wonderful gifts of compassion, commitment, and a faith-vision of life. We at the College of Saint Elizabeth treasured his time with us as he served nine years on our Board of Trustees. We look forward to bestowing on him the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters at our Commencement in May 2011. We know his Commencement Address will leave our students with great hope as they face the future. Finally, Steve's great sense of humor permeates all conversation and leaves one refreshed by the exchange. We treasure his presence in our lives.

SR. FRANCIS RAFTERY, SC
President, College of Saint Elizabeth

My years working for Steve will always be a highlight of my life as well as an experience of a lifetime. He is a man of tremendous compassion, understanding, and intellect whose enthusiastic faith, belief and love of God and mankind are both unending and contagious. Steve leads by example offering encouragement, support, and friendship to all who cross his path. I was so proud to work at his side. I will always be grateful for the influence that Steve has had on my life and for the memories of the time he allowed me the honor and privilege of sharing his journey as President of The College of New Rochelle.

LINDA EBINGER
Former Assistant to the President

REFLECTIONS

By

Mauro C. Romita

Former Chair, CNR Board of Trustees & President, Castle Oil Corporation

Steve has led CNR through good times and difficult times, never once losing sight of the mission and carrying it through with a dignity and grace befitting a President of The College of New Rochelle.



With Mauro C. Romita & Carla Romita

I had the privilege of serving The College of New Rochelle for more than 30 years as a member of the Board of Trustees and finally as Chair of the Board of Trustees. It was an honor to work with such an esteemed scholar and extraordinary woman as Sr. Dorothy Ann Kelly. In 1997, when Sr. Dorothy Ann announced that she intended to retire from the presidency of the College at the end of her term, our board knew that it would be extremely difficult to find someone who could step into the position of being a successor to the College's "second foundress."

The executive committee functioned as our search committee and we quickly realized during our deliberations that we had an extraordinary talent right in our midst. Dr. Stephen Sweeny had been doing a superb job at the College for over 20 years; first serving as assistant to the provost and later as the College's senior vice president for academic affairs. His education, scholarship, and years of excellent performance at the College made him a leading candidate for the position. As the committee considered him, what became increasingly obvious was his incredible loyalty and commit-

ment to the mission of The College of New Rochelle. In addition, Steve was very popular throughout the College Community. His popularity grew from his diligence in his work and the fact that he treated everyone on campus with respect. For Steve, it makes no difference if he is addressing the faculty or maintenance personnel. He treats everyone with the same level of dignity and respect. The committee was certain that Steve was the right candidate.

When I approached Sr. Dorothy Ann with Steve's candidacy, she agreed readily that he would be a formidable candidate. She believed wholeheartedly that he had the right combination of qualities to lead the institution she so dearly loved.

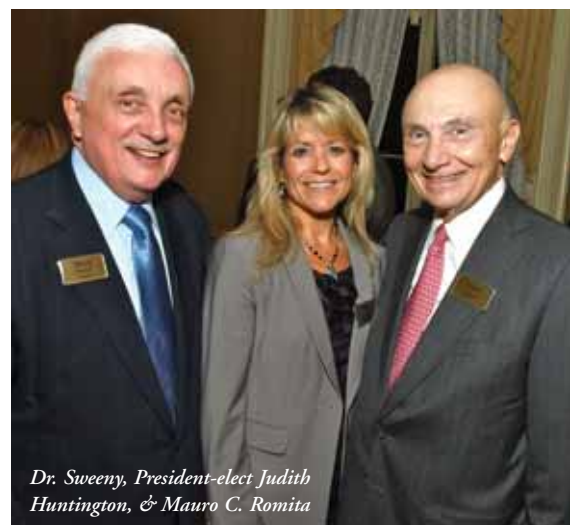
Steve's credentials were unassailable, but I knew that proposing a man to lead our beloved women's college would be an issue that the board would want to consider cautiously, so I suggested that Steve come before the board and make a presentation before I called for a vote. He did this and bowled them over. The depth of his knowledge and understanding of the College, his approach to the issues, and his vision for its future won over every last member of that board. The vote was unanimous and it has always been unequivocally clear that our choice was the right one. Taking charge of the College after the departure of a beloved leader is a difficult task, but Steve always struck the right note and made the job his.

I remained Chairman of the Board for a year after Steve became president. I had joined the advisory committee and then the board during the tenure of Sr. Dorothy Ann because my family and I deeply value the mission of the College. My daughter, Carla, is now a trustee. Sr. Dorothy Ann made CNR a pioneer in community outreach and adult education. I saw how much it meant to my own wife, Camille, to be able to go back to school while raising a family and earn her degrees in such a

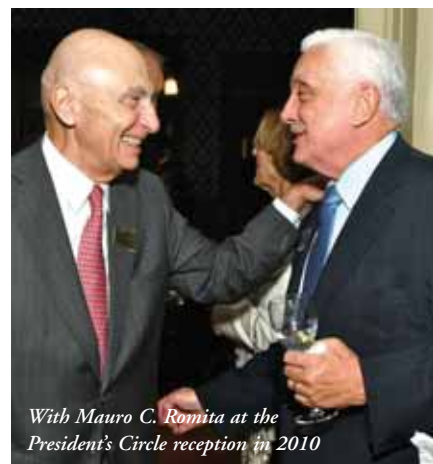
supportive environment. This mission of providing access to education to those who would otherwise be denied is the modern manifestation of the mission of St. Angela Merici, foundress of the Order of St. Ursula. When faced with two paths from which to choose, marriage and children or a cloistered life in the convent, St. Angela forged her own. She founded the Company of St. Ursula, went out into the world and dedicated her life to God and the education of young women. I especially value Steve's deep understanding of the Ursuline mission and applaud him for continuing to strengthen the School of New Resources. Steve knows that the heart of any great institution of learning is its library and the extensive renovation of Gill Library was a major accomplishment during his tenure. The construction of CNR's magnificent Wellness Center on time and on budget is a tribute to his talent and hard work, the support of his staff, and to the College's next president, Judith Huntington.

Fundraising is a major focus of every college president and Steve has managed to do a fantastic job even in the toughest of times. He's a natural speaker with an extraordinary gift of persuasion. When Steve asks for something for the College, people realize that he is speaking from deep within his heart.

Steve is a highly principled and compassionate person. In running any large institution one isn't always going to be the most popular person. Steve has made the tough decisions with the College's and people's well-being in mind. He's done this while retaining the respect and admiration of the College Community and the community at large. This is in large part because he explains his decisions with intelligence and respect for all concerned. I've seen this compassion in the way he treats students and administrators. CNR has a very diverse pop-



Dr. Sweeny, President-elect Judith Huntington, & Mauro C. Romita



With Mauro C. Romita at the President's Circle reception in 2010

ulation with different backgrounds, cultures, and religious beliefs. Steve has managed to foster an atmosphere that celebrates our Catholic tradition, but in which all feel valued and respected.

His respect and admiration for the Ursulines is without equal. Steve knows that they are the core and heart of the College and that the Ursuline mission is what makes CNR so special. He is a devout Catholic and it's this spiritual side that gives him the ability to be both direct and compassionate. For the past 14 years, Steve has led CNR through good times and difficult times, never once losing sight of the mission and carrying it through with a dignity and grace befitting a President of The College of New Rochelle. ■



The College of New Rochelle

29 CASTLE PLACE

NEW ROCHELLE, NY 10805-2339

